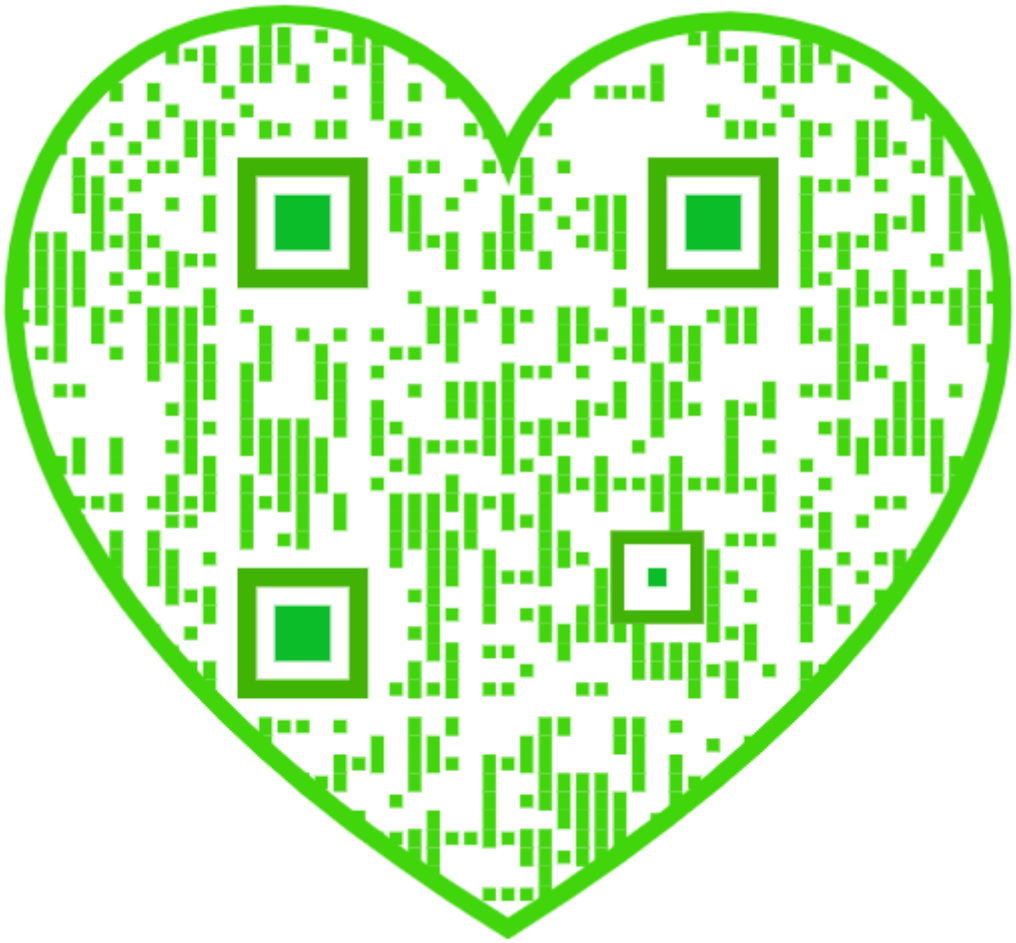

FOUNTAINS ABBEY

Fountains Abbey.

From a drawing in the possession of J.E. Taylor. Esq

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FOUNTAINS ABBEY

THE STORY OF A MEDIÆVAL MONASTERY BY GEORGE HODGES D.D. DEAN OF THE EPISCOPAL THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL CAMBRIDGE MASSACHUSETTS

LONDON: JOHN MURRAY
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TO MY WIFE
I INSCRIBE THIS FRUIT
OF A GOLDEN SUMMER

PREFACE

THE materials out of which this book is made were taken mainly from two sources: a description and explanation of the Abbey ruins by Mr. W. H. St. John Hope, and a collection and annotation of the Abbey records by Mr. John Richard Walbran.

The ruins have been minutely examined by Mr. St. John Hope, who has left no stone unconsidered. He has brought to his study of the Abbey a profound knowledge of monastic architecture. The account of his investigations is published in the fifteenth volume of the "Yorkshire Archæological Journal," to which is appended a historical ground-plan of the Abbey, drawn by Mr. Harold Brakspear. The Marquess of Ripon has had copies of this plan framed and placed in various parts of the buildings for the information of visitors. Through the courtesy of Mr. Hope and Mr. Brakspear I am enabled to give a reduced version of this excellent plan.

The records have been gathered together by Mr. Walbran, and printed, with many learned and interesting notes, in two volumes of the publications of the Surtees Society, entitled "Memorials of Fountains Abbey."

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They begin with a contemporary narrative of the foundation of the Abbey, and extend to the grant which the king made of the Abbey lands after the suppression. They include the chronicle of the administrations of the abbots; the deed of the ground on which the Abbey stands; a series of royal charters and a series of papal privileges; various records of the dealings of the Monastery with its neighbours, clerical and lay; letters to Thomas Cromwell from Layton and Legh, the commissioners at whose demand the Abbey was surrendered, and from Marmaduke Bradley, the abbot who surrendered it; and the king's assignment of pensions by name to the abbot and the monks after the dissolution.

Of these documents, the longest and most interesting is the contemporary account of the foundation—*Narratio de fundatione Fontanis Monasterii.* It was written by Hugh, a monk of the daughter house of Kirkstall, upon information given him by Serlo, an aged brother then resident in that abbey, who had once lived at Fountains. Serlo was almost a hundred years old when he sat in the sun in the cloister of Kirkstall, and told this story of his early days, answering Hugh's questions. "It is now," he says, "the sixty-ninth year of my conversion. When I first went to Fountains to associate myself to that

holy brotherhood, I was, as I remember, about beginning my thirtieth year." The Abbey, at that time, as he tells us in another place, was five years old; but he had been acquainted with the brethren before. "When the monks left the monastery of York, I myself was present. I had known their names and faces from my boyhood; I was born in their country, was brought up amongst them, and to several of them I was related by ties of blood. And although I am, as thou may see, far advanced in years, I am very grateful to my old age that my memory remains unimpaired, and particularly retentive of those things committed to it in early years. Such things, therefore, relating to the origin of the Monastery of Fountains, which I personally witnessed, or have gathered from the credible report of my elders, I will now relate."

Serlo spent ten years at Fountains, leaving in 1147, with the colony which founded Kirkstall. After that, the chronicler writes not from personal observation, but from near acquaintance. There would naturally be frequent communication between the mother and the daughter house. The reminiscences end with the death of the sixth abbot, in 1190. Thence the history proceeds, by the hand of Hugh and others, to recount the administration of the seventh and eighth

abbots, and mention is made in the last sentence of the ninth and tenth.

In addition to these books, information is to be had concerning the Cistercian Order in its official documents. These are the Life of St. Stephen Harding, the chief founder; the Exordium (1120), a history of the beginning of the Order; the Charta Charitatis (1119), its constitution; the Rule of St. Benedict, to whose strict keeping the Cistercians were pledged; the Usus Antiquiores or Consuetudines, the Customs of the Society; and the Instituta Capitali Generalis, or laws passed during several hundred years by the General Chapter for the government of the Order. A life of St. Stephen, in English, was published in 1844, under the editorship of John Henry Newman, as the first in a projected series of lives of the English saints. The Rule of St. Benedict is admirably summarised in the article on Monachism in the "Encyclopædia Britannica." The Institutes have been printed in successive numbers of the "Yorkshire Archæological Journal" (vols. ix., x. and xi.) by the Rev. J. T. Fowler. The other documents are assembled in the 166th volume of Migne's "Patrologia Latina."

In the Rites of Durham, a contemporary account of the customs of a Benedictine abbey, light is thrown upon obscure passages

in these official documents, and much help is given in the way of homely detail towards an understanding of the routine of the monastic day. Dean Stubbs, in his lectures on Ely Cathedral, and the Rev. John Henry Blunt, in his account of Sion House, prefixed to his edition of the " Myroure of oure Ladye," take us pleasantly into the refectory, telling us what the monastic folk had for dinner, and with what curious signs they communicated one with another during the silent meal.

The writer gratefully acknowledges the friendly services of the Dean of Ripon and of Charles Edward Eardley Childers, of Pittsburg, and the courtesy of the Marquess and Marchioness of Ripon during his locumtenency of Studley Church, in the summer of 1901.

THE DEANERY
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
Sept. 1903

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[These plans are derived from the *Yorkshire Archæological Journal* vol. xv.]

ERRATA

Plate facing page 52. *For* "The Cloisters"
read "The Cellarium"

Page 9, lines 3 and 13. *For* "Rievaux"
read "Rievaulx"

CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNING

THE first Fountains Abbey was a forest tree. In the days of the simple beginning, the brethren ate and slept and said their prayers under an elm which stood in the middle of the valley.

The elm lived into the eighteenth century, and toward the end of its life was made to divide its honours with a group of venerable yews. Some said that the monks found their first shelter under the yews. But Serlo settled the matter, hundreds of years ago, in favour of the elm. *Ulmus*, he said, *Ulmus erat vallis in medio, lignum frondosum.* The yews were there, however, in the first days, and one or two of them are still surviving.

They are propped up on either hand, like an old man leaning on his staff;

but they live. The elm has wholly disappeared. Mr. Walbran's maternal great-grandfather remembered "the stump of an enormous elm tree in the last stage of decay, which was called 'the Fountain's elm.'" It stood "between the river Skell and the stream from Stank's pond, not far from the eastern boundary of the Abbey site." But the smooth turf covers the place. Only the yews look down from their gentle hill upon the broken walls. There they were when the monks came, a little adventurous company, to begin their life of seclusion and prayer. Their leaves were green when the Abbey rose in splendour, and mitred abbots walked in their shadow. They saw the expulsion of the convent and the ruin of the monastery. They are a symbol of the persistence of the quiet, elemental forces amidst our human chance and change.

The monks of Fountains Abbey belonged to the Cistercian Order.

In the twelfth century, when the Abbey began, this was the newest religious society. The Benedictines, after splendid services to civilisation, had encountered the temptations which accompany the praises and the gifts of grateful communities, and had been worsted. They had verified the wise saying, "When anybody does a good thing, all the neighbours join together to keep him from doing it again." They had grown rich in the treasures which are subject to the invasions of moth and rust and thieves, but they were growing poor in the accounts of heaven. The purpose of the Cistercians was to return to primitive monastic simplicity. Gregory the Great had said that he who would see angels must have his head pillowed on a stone. The Cistercians believed it.

Stephen Harding, who founded the Cistercian Order, was an Englishman, from Dorsetshire. He spent his early years in the monastery at Sherborne.

Thence he went wandering, in the free fashion of the time, partly to see the sights, partly to save his soul, and made a pilgrimage to Rome. On his way back, in Burgundy, he chanced upon a little company of monks, who were encamped in a clearing in the midst of a thick forest. They had built a chapel with the trunks of trees, and around it had gathered a forlorn group of huts made of the boughs, and were freezing and starving to their hearts' content. All this filled Stephen with devout envy. He joined this monastery, and thereafter saw England again no more.

But presently, the rule seemed to many of the brethren to be too hard for human endurance, and they relaxed it, and began to live more softly, so that Stephen was dissatisfied. And out he went, and a few like-minded brethren with him, in quest of hardship, which they found at Citeaux. This was a wild place in the dark woods, with a deep stream running

through the midst of it, the banks of which were the residence of beasts of prey. Here Stephen was made prior; the honest severity of Benedict's laws was sought again; the brethren lived in holy simplicity.

And then friends appeared. This good life was appreciated by rich and powerful neighbours, and they brought gifts and built a church; and one of them was buried there. This was Odo, duke of Burgundy, whose son Hugh, with a company of friends, people of the court, took a fancy for going to church at the monastery chapel, so that the plain place shone with their silks and jewels, and the simple brethren were distracted in their prayers by the neighbourhood of all this fine array. The chapel was becoming a fashionable church. By this time Stephen was the abbot—abbot of Cistercium, which was the Latin for Citeaux. And Stephen stopped it. He turned all these gay worshippers out of doors, forbade

them ever to come in again, and shut the monastery gate in the face of all his influential friends.

Then he made the plain services more plain. He forbade that "in the House of God, in which they wished to serve God devoutly day and night, anything should be found which savoured of pride and excess, or can in any way corrupt poverty, that guardian of virtue, which they had chosen of their own accord." There must be no gold or silver in the church, except a silver cup for the sacramental wine. A single candlestick must suffice for light, and that must be of iron and straight from top to bottom. Vestments must be of common stuff, no more of silk or cloth-of-gold. All the pictures must come down. The brethren said their prayers in a chapel as severe as a Puritan meeting-house. In the midst of a time of monastic splendour, when monks of St. Benedict and even monks of Cluny rode abroad like knights or

princes, Stephen Harding's household were separate from the world in all sincerity.

Once, when the poverty which they invited came and lodged with them so long that the pantry was bare even of crumbs, one of the brothers went out to beg for bread, and came home with a great apronful. But when Stephen found that the bread had come from one who had made his money by dishonesty, he took it off the table, carried it into the fields and gave it to the shepherds. The brethren used to notice that in the evening, when the abbot went into the church, he often stopped, after he had shut the door, and pressed against it with his hand. And when they asked him what it meant, he said, "I am forced during the day to give free course to many thoughts for the ordering of the house; all these I bid remain outside the door, and tell them not to venture in, and to wait till the morrow, when I find them

all ready for me after Prime has been said."

It seemed, for a time, as if this severity of discipline and this unworldliness of spirit would forever bar the door against new-comers. Brethren died, and nobody took their places. At last, however, all this good planting came to its proper harvest. One day, in the year 1113, thirty men appeared at the gates of Citeaux, asking to be received as novices. And their leader was a man whose character and strength made him presently the greatest churchman of his time. With the accession of Bernard, the Cistercian monastery grew speedily into the Cistercian Order; and the Cistercian Order came in due time into England.

Turstin, Archbishop of York, wrote to Bernard at Clairvaux, asking for Cistercian monks; and Bernard, being now, in Stephen's old age, at the head of the Order, sent over a colony which settled in the valley of the Rie, at Rievaux.

There they lived their new life of simple devotion. And presently the fame of the sanctity of the monks of Rievaux began to vex the consciences of their neighbours.

The Benedictine abbey of St. Mary of York was a rich and vast establishment. It had received gifts from William the Norman, and from William his son. It was so fine that Richard the prior and a little company of sympathetic brethren, touched by the example of the simple manners of Rievaux, came to the conclusion that it was too good a place to be an appropriate residence for a Christian. They determined to leave it.

Richard the prior, Gervase the sub-prior, Richard the sacrist, Walter the almoner, and Robert the precentor were of one mind in the matter, and presently a sufficient number of devout conspirators was added to make thirteen. That was the required number for the beginning of a monastic colony. Together they

came to the old abbot and asked leave to go. But the abbot met them with a stout refusal. The malcontents were made to understand that they had asked a grievous thing; they had despised their order, and brought confusion into the holy house; they had attempted to break their solemn vows. To this, the prior made appropriate answers, but satisfaction was impossible. Back and forth, the matter was discussed all summer, most of the monks taking the abbot's part. At last, in October, the archbishop came. There was a noisy meeting in the cloister; abbot and archbishop, monks and secu-lars; with the townsfolk crowding at the abbey gate. "Your church is interdicted!" cried the archbishop, raising his voice above the din. "Interdict it, for aught we care, for a hundred years!" shouted the brethren. Then they made a rush for the prior and his friends, who got with great haste into the church, the archbishop being with them, and barred

the door for fear of their lives. Finally, they escaped in safety. The affair made a great commotion in a day when abbots and bishops were seldom on good terms. The abbot sent messengers to the King, the first Henry; the bishop wrote to the legate of the Pope. But the thing was done, and stayed done.

Two Richards, two Ralphs, Gervase, Walter, Robert and Alexander, Geoffrey, Gregory, Thomas, Hamo and Gamel thus abandoned St. Mary's, and for the moment were lodgers in the archbishop's house. Even this little company were not all of one mind, for presently two of them were homesick and went back; of whom Ralph "made terms with his flesh and his belly clave to the ground," that is, he remained in the old way, but Gervase again repented and cast his lot with the reformers. Ralph's place was taken by a second Robert, a monk of Whitby.

Archbishop Turstin had a country

seat at Ripon, to which he went to keep the Christmas of 1132, bringing the thirteen brethren with him. And on the morrow of the festival, taking them out three miles into the country, he established them upon a piece of his own land, in the narrow valley of the Skell. The deed of gift of this land—the "charter of foundation"—is still preserved at Studley Royal. William the dean of York, William the treasurer, Hugh the precentor, Robert and William the archdeacons, five canons of St. Peters, five canons of St. Wilfrid, and nine laymen signed it as witnesses.

The place, as the narrative says, was a long way out of the world—*locum a cunctis retro seculis inhabitatum;* it was full of thorns and rocks, and seemed a better dwelling for wild beasts than for men. But they accepted it with gratitude. In the midst of the valley they made a thatched hut, with the trunk of the great elm for roof-pole, and having

chosen the prior Richard to be their abbot, they began with contented minds to live the life of devotion and straitness for which they had longed amidst the pernicious comforts of the Abbey of St. Mary. They named their little monastery *De Fontibus*, from the springs which abounded in the valley. "O ye wells, bless ye the Lord," they sang—*Benedicite, fontes Domino*, and the words were echoed back in the frosty air from the cliffs on either side.

The same spirit was in all their hearts —the spirit of religion, the desire to devote themselves more perfectly to God. They took life very seriously. They had stout convictions, and purposed to live in consistency with them, and sought a place where that should be possible.

In the following spring, the brethren sent messengers to St. Bernard at Clairvaux, asking to be admitted to the Cistercian Order. Bernard was at that time

the greatest man in Europe. He had just decided between two rival claimants which was the true Pope. He received the men of Fountains with great kindness, finding in them a spirit kindred with his own. He sent them back with a gracious letter, which is still preserved. *Fratribus charissimis et desideratissimis*, he wrote, *Ricardo abbati et hiis qui cum eo sunt, frater Bernardus abbas Clarevallis, in Domino, salutem.* And he sent with them Geoffrey, a monk of his own monastery, a person of ability and experience, to teach them the new ways. Thus the new life began; and presently their number was increased. Seventeen new brethren came, seven of them being in orders.

Their number was increased, but their resources were in no way enlarged. The archbishop, indeed, continued to be good to them, and the neighbours occasionally sent things in,—housewives at their weekly baking remembering the

brethren and putting in an extra batch for them.

A little money they earned by making mats. But that year there was a famine in the land, till the abbot had to go out through the surrounding country to find food, and even then found none; so that for a time they lived on leaves which they boiled with salt in the water of the stream —the friendly elm, as the narrative says, affording them food as well as shelter. One day, they said, the Lord Christ knocked at the door, in the guise of an ill-clad, hungry man, and asked an alms in the starving time, when they had but two loaves and a half, and no prospects of more. At first, they had prudently refused him, but when he continued asking had given him one loaf. And behold, within a half-hour, two men appeared from Knaresborough Castle with a plentiful supply of bread, over which the monks recited the "Inasmuch as ye have done it" of the Gospel.

Finally, the situation became intolerable. The brethren had, indeed, made choice of poverty, and had come out into the wilderness in devout search of her; but this was a different matter. This was destitution rather than poverty, so that, the next year, when there appeared no likelihood of any betterment, the abbot made a journey to Clairvaux, and begged St. Bernard to give them lands in France, or in any place where they might live and not die. And Bernard agreed to give them a habitation near his own abbey.

Happily, they did not need the gift. Abbot Richard, on his return, found a change in the fortunes of the house. The colony had been joined by Hugh, the dean of York. He had been in the company of the archbishop on the day of his stormy visitation, and had seen the men of Fountains as they faced the reproaches of their brethren; and being now an old man and tired of the world,

he had resolved to say his prayers for the rest of his life with them. Thus he had resigned his high position, and turned his back on his splendid minster, and had cast in his lot with the starving colony. And he was fortunately rich, and brought books with him, and money. Part of the money they gave to the poor, part they put into the general fund, part they used to pay the carpenters and masons who were building the church and cloister.

After this, prosperity continued. Canon Serlo, of York, who, like the dean, had witnessed the escape of the monks from St. Mary's, and whose name is still to be seen among the witnesses to the charter of foundation, now became a brother of Fountains; and with him Canon Tosti, who is remembered in the narrative as a pleasant person. And each added to the treasury. Then Robert and Raganilda de Sartis, owners of the neighbouring estate of Herleshow, gave

it to the monks, adding to it the forest of Warsall. Also Serlo de Pembroke, a young courtier—*juvenis quidam de domo regis*—lying at the point of death, gave them his country-seat at Cayton, and when he died was buried in the monks' graveyard, *inter sanctos*. This was probably the first interment in the little cemetery which awaited the brethren to the east of the rising church. About the same time, the abbot got a farm at Aldbrough—*grangiam fertilem*—in a place which even from Roman times had been a fruitful region.

Presently, in 1135, King Stephen being at York, the monastery was exempted by him from payment of "taxes, danegelds, assises, pleas and scutages." Also, a little later, in 1141, Pope Innocent exempted the monastery from payment of tithes.

From that day, says Serlo the narrator, who had now become a member of the monastic household, the Lord bles-

sed our valleys with the blessing of heaven above and of the deep that lieth under, multiplying the brethren, increasing their possessions, pouring down showers of benediction, being a wall unto them on the right hand and on the left. What perfection of life, he cries, was there at Fountains! What emulation of virtue! What stability of discipline! The house was enriched in wealth, without; still more in holiness, within. Its name became famous, and the great people of the world reverenced it.

CHAPTER II

THE GROWTH OF THE ABBEY

I. THE COLONIES

THE goodness of the brethren made a deep impression upon the community. Turbulent and cruel as were the times, there was, nevertheless, some attention paid to the voice of conscience. It is true that this voice commonly made itself heard after the event, and served rather to reproach men than to deter them; but it did speak, and men listened. The deeds which they did were incredibly bad, but after they had done them, and the fierce heat of passion had died down, they were both sorry and afraid. Then they remembered that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Doubting the value of their own prayers, they looked about for righteous

men to make intercession for them. God sat on His throne, like the king, and had His court about Him, part of angels, part of saints in glory, and part of holy persons still in the flesh. The sinner's hope of success in his petition lay in the securing of the kindly offices of some of these influential courtiers. And these were to be found most readily on earth in monasteries. Accordingly, these companies of praying men seemed, even to the sinners of the neighbourhood, to be engaged in an important and essential business. If the sinner had money enough, he engaged a group of them to pray for him in particular. He built a monastery, and established them in it for that necessary purpose.

Thus Ralph de Merlay, chancing on his travels to spend a day at the Abbey, and there beholding the pious conversation of the brethren, made up his mind, from what he saw, that these were the kind of men to have influence with God;

and being in need of friends at that court, he asked the abbot to let him have some of them, *pro redemptione animae suae.* This was the first colony which went out from Fountains. The year was 1137. The knight took the monks into his castle at Morpeth, in whose neighbourhood he presently built them a monastery, which they called Newminster. The abbot of this new brotherhood was the Robert who had come from Whitby to take the place of the inconstant Gervase after the flight from York: a good man, modest in his bearing, gentle in his conversation, bearing rule with mercy, and at last enrolled in the honourable list of the saints. The abbey, like the mother house, was built beside a little river; and its three daughters, Pipewell, Sawley and Roche, sat likewise, in the true Cistercian manner, on the banks of narrow streams.

In the next year another nobleman, Hugh of Tatshall, in Lincolnshire, re-

solved to establish a Cistercian house, and sent to Abbot Richard for advice and monks from Fountains, and founded Kirkstead Abbey on the river Witham. At the same time the Bishop of Lincoln asked the abbot for more men —the two companies of colonists leaving Fountains on the same day—and settled them, after some wandering, at Louth Park. Their abbot was the Geoffrey who forsook his companions at the bishop's, and went back to St. Mary's, to return in deep penitence; who was thus assured of their entire confidence in him.

In 1145, Hugh de Bolebec, for the redeeming of his sins, begged for the services of the brethren of Fountains, and an abbey was built at Woburn.

In 1146, the Bishop of Bergen came to Fountains, and his heart was set on having a Cistercian house in Norway. Thirteen brethren were found to brave the sea and the unknown land. Thus was erected the monastery of Lisa-

Kloster, the abbey of the valley of light. One of the Ralphs of the original settlement was the abbot. In the library of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, is a manuscript life of St. Olaf, which was once among the books of Fountains. It is bound with other manuscripts in the skin of a seal. Ralph came back after many laborious years to spend his last days in the mother house. He may have brought with him this memento of the Norway mission. It is pleasantly told of him in the narrative that he used to sleep a good deal in his old age, and that the Lord sent a prompting angel to awake him when he slept too long—*si sompno, forsitan, per noctes diutius indulgeret, eum excitaret.*

The next year, 1147, saw three colonies go out from Fountains. Henry de Lacy, of Pontefract Castle, having meditated upon his misdeeds during a long illness, vowed that he would build a Cistercian house to the honour of the Virgin

Fountains Abbey.
The East End.

Microfilm

Mary. Its tenants were Fountains men, under the abbacy of Alexander, another of the founders. They had many troubles, some on account of the climate, some on account of their neighbours. Serlo, our narrator, was one of them, and might have made his story longer had he chose. It is from another record that we learn that Alexander objected to the nearness of the parish church, whose services distracted the attention of his monks, and for the sake of peace and quiet pulled the building down in spite of the parishioners. The parish appealed to the Archbishop of York, then to the Pope, but the monks prevailed in both courts. The neighbourhood, however, was naturally hostile thereafter, and presently the abbot found a more convenient situation, where they built Kirkstall Abbey.

Five days after the departure of these brothers from the gates of Fountains, another company went, at the petition of the Earl of Albemarle, to found the ab-

bey of Vaudey, the house of the valley of God. The monk Adam, who had been architect of the buildings at Kirkstall and Woburn, and was now in charge of the monks at Vaudey, found that the Earl of Albemarle was disposed to do yet more. He had once vowed, for his sins, to go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and had never gone, and now was old and fat and could not go. This, as Adam faithfully reminded him, was a serious matter; but it could be made right. If the earl would build another abbey, Adam promised that his Order would persuade the Pope to take that good work as an equivalent. The promise was performed, through the kindly offices of St. Bernard, and the earl told Adam to choose a suitable site. The monk, accordingly, looked about this way and that in Holderness, where the earl's lands lay. It was the country which the Conqueror had bestowed upon Odo, his brother-in-law. The son of Odo, the earl's father,

had complained of its sterility, saying that it gave him only oaten bread to eat. But presently at Meaux, some four miles east of Beverley, Adam came upon a fair hill, which by prophetic coincidence had been named St. Mary's Mount. Woods were growing all about, with open lands which promised good harvests, and streams running through them. There he thrust his staff into the ground, and cried, "Verily, this place shall be called the house of the heavenly King." And there the monastery was built, in spite of the reluctance of the earl, who had already selected the place for a park. The first abbot was the enterprising Adam. This was in 1150.

Thus within a space of less than twenty years, St. Mary of Fountains had become the mother of eight fair daughters. Meanwhile, the Cistercian Order had been growing at some such rate as this in many other places: too fast and too far, they feared at Clairvaux. In 1152, the

General Chapter discouraged the founding of new monasteries. After that, no more colonies went out from Fountains.

II. THE BUILDINGS

Meanwhile, the thatched hut about the elm had given place to a group of noble buildings.

A Cistercian monastery consisted of certain invariable structures arranged according to a prescribed plan. St. Stephen's Abbey of Citeaux, St. Bernard's Abbey of Clairvaux, determined all other abbeys of the order. At the heart of the abbey was the cloister, an open square of green, on whose four sides stood the essential monastic houses. On the north was the church; on the east was the chapter-house, with a book-room on one side and a parlour on the other, and the dormitory in the second storey over all; on the south was the refectory, with the warming-room on one side, and the kitchen on the other; on the west was the

store-house, having over it the dormitory of the lay brethren. Outside of this cloister group, wherever it was most convenient, stood an infirmary, and a guest-house, and whatever barns and mills and workshops were needed for the maintenance of the conventual life.

During the administration of the first two abbots—Richard (1132–1139), who had been the prior at York, and Richard (1139–1143), who had been the sacrist—these buildings were erected, part of wood and part of stone. The architect was Geoffrey of Clairvaux, whom St. Bernard had sent to instruct the monks at their entrance into the Order. The stone came from the steep banks of the valley. The labourers were the monks themselves, assisted by their neighbours, some of whom were hired, while others gave their day's work as an investment in the securities of heaven. It is interesting to find that the little company of poor monks, rich in faith, laid out the foun-

dations of their church upon the great lines on which it stands to-day. Other generations built the chapel of the nine altars and raised the noble tower, but the vast nave with its transepts was both planned and completed by the men who began the monastery. These large proportions did not necessarily mean that they expected a great number of monks to say their prayers within these wide walls. They were not adjusting the building, after our manner, to the size of the congregation. They were intent upon the glory of God. The church was to be an evidence of their conception of the dignity, the strength, and the splendour of the Christian religion.

First, they built the chancel, which was pulled down in the next century and built over again larger and finer. There they probably held their services while the masons and the carpenters were busy with the other work. Then they built the transepts, and the south wall of the nave

as high as the sills of the windows; then the lower courses of the west wall. After that, they finished the south wall, because that was on the cloister side; and built its great bays. Then, the north wall, and the rest; roofing it all in. Mr. St. John Hope is of the opinion that the church, passing through these various stages, and waiting at intervals for additions to the building fund, was quite completed before 1147. The west wall of the cloister belongs to the same period.

Meanwhile, in the midst of all this building, Abbot Richard was called away to Rome. Bishop Alberic of Ostia, making a visitation of the country as papal legate, and meeting Richard, was so impressed by the abbot's piety and sense that he made up his mind that the Pope had need of him. So he took him away from Fountains—whether for a temporary or a permanent absence is uncertain—and brought him down to the Papal Court. There, however, the good

man fell ill of a fever, and presently died. This was in 1139.

Richard, the sacrist, who succeeded him, was a man of great humility. He had been chosen, the narrative informs us, by the advice of St. Bernard, by the unanimous voice of the convent, and under the invocation of the Holy Ghost; but still he held back, diffident and honestly reluctant, from the honours of the abbacy—*Homo simplex et timens Deum, et totius religionis ardentissimus emulator*. Three times he went to Clairvaux hoping to be released, and finally St. Bernard heard him; but when he returned with this permission to retire, the whole assembly of the brethren rose up with such grief and remonstrance that he consented to continue. He died, however, at Clairvaux, where he was attending a meeting of the General Chapter, and was there buried by St. Bernard, in 1143.

Bernard nominated as Richard's suc-

cessor a Yorkshireman who had for some years been abbot of Vauclair, and he was elected by the brethren. Henry Murdac was a strict disciplinarian. He proceeded at once to destroy such tares as he discovered in the field of the Lord. The second Richard had always insisted that he had no ability or even wish to play the part of Martha. It is likely that under his gentle rule some of the brethren demonstrated the fact that a change of names is not necessarily a change of natures. The Benedictine abbey of St. Mary of York had been forsaken for the Cistercian abbey of St. Mary of Fountains, but the new resolutions had not driven out of all minds a secret preference for a modicum of comfort. So Henry found occasion to amend the monastic ways. He was a great abbot—*magnifice administravit.* He added to the possessions of the house, and carried on the construction of the buildings.

Unhappily, Henry became deeply in-

volved in the ecclesiastical politics of the time. The good Turstin, the benefactor of the Abbey, had been succeeded at York by William, who was accused of having obtained his preferment by bribery. William had cleared himself of this charge before a competent council, and had been consecrated archbishop by the direction of the Pope. But he had not received the pall when the Pope died, and Eugenius, a pupil of St. Bernard, became Pope in his stead. Bernard believed in the guilt of William. He prevented the new Pope from investing him with the pall. Bernard's representative in England was the Abbot of Fountains, who had already made a journey to Rome to protest against William's appointment. When, therefore, this ill news came to the archbishop's friends in Yorkshire, and they looked about for somebody on whom to visit their indignation, Henry Murdac seemed the person most eligible to that

distinction. So they set out, a considerable company of them, well armed, and made their way with clamor of voices into the secluded valley, and forced the monastery gates and sacked the place. Much they broke, some they plundered, and the rest they set on fire. There it blazed, then, that great work, built, as they said, in the sweat of their own brows—*in suo sudore constructa.* The church, however, escaped great injury. Indeed, the abbot himself, who was lying prostrate at the foot of the altar, was not discovered, being protected by the hand of God. It is likely that the buildings which were thus destroyed were temporary structures, for the most part, made of wood. Whatever damage was done was speedily repaired. The neighbours came in—*de vicinia viri fideles*—and the reconstruction was undertaken with such zeal that the new was better than the old. Then the chapter-house was built, and the dormitory over it down to the river, and the guest-house

by the bridge. To this time belong also the north walls of the malthouse and the bakehouse. The fire took place in 1146 or 1147.

This violence was much more disastrous to the archbishop than to the abbot, for the Pope deposed William and confirmed Henry, who was elected in his place. Thus the monastery lost its third abbot.

It is interesting to remember that William was vindicated after all. When Henry died, in 1153, a friendly Pope restored the deposed archbishop to his place. One of William's first acts on entering his diocese was to visit Fountains, to express his contrition for the harm which his friends, without his knowledge, had committed, and to promise proper compensation. When he died, he was enrolled among the saints, and the Abbot of Fountains was one of the judges who decided that he was worthy to be canonised.

This was Abbot Richard, who had two predecessors with brief terms, Maurice and Thorold. Richard had a long and troubled rule. Our ancient enemy, the devil, disquieted by the peace of the holy house, tempted the brethren, who behaved so proudly towards the abbot that he had to expel some of them. After that, the Lord blessed him abundantly. So he died, in 1170, and was buried in the new chapter-house, the first of nineteen abbots who were to lie there under the monks' feet.

Robert of Pipewell was the next abbot. He was a strenuous person—*strenue administravit*, says the narrative; and again, *multa strenue gessit in administratione sua*. He is praised for many virtues, and among others for his zeal for building, but the particular additions which he made are not named. He beautified the church, and erected sumptuous buildings, probably the southern range of the cloister—the refectory side—and the

western guest-house. The northern part of the west wall of the cellarium appears to have been made about this time.

William of Newminster (1179–1190) and Ralph Haget of Kirkstall (1190–1203) carried on the Abbey into the thirteenth century; but without any notable, or, at least, discernible, erection of buildings.

With William's administration, old Serlo's narrative stops. He praises William, but says that he may perhaps (*forsitan*) have been just a shade too strict. The acts of Ralph are described by Hugh of Kirkstall, who has written up to this point at Serlo's dictation. Here, says Hugh, the old man made an end of speaking. You yourself, says Serlo, know well what to say about the holy Abbot Ralph.

Hugh had become a monk while Ralph was Abbot of Kirkstall, and had lived under his rule for seven years. Happy would he have been, he says,

could he have continued in that blessed state. Yet those were troubled years at Kirkstall—*adversa foras pugnas, intus timores, domesticorum insidias, rei familiaris inopiam, bonorum distractionem.* Everything went wrong; without were fightings, within were fears. There was famine, and spoiling of goods, and misconduct of bad brethren. And Abbot Ralph made but an ineffectual effort to cope with these distresses. He was no strenuous administrator. He was busy dreaming dreams, and seeing visions. Once, he told Hugh, he even had a revelation of the Blessed Trinity, in which he distinctly saw three Persons—*intribus personis apparentem!* But these celestial sights seem not to have made his terrestrial way plain. Nevertheless, on the death of William he was made Abbot of Fountains; and, curiously enough, he seems to have done fairly well in this larger place. He enforced the rule, both in the mother house and in the depen-

dent monasteries. He was particularly kind to the poor, who, on the occasion of a famine and a fever, flocked to the Abbey gates and were lodged there by the abbot in huts made of branches of the neighbouring trees, where physicians and priests ministered unto them.

Three Johns ruled Fountains during the first half of the thirteenth century, and substantially completed the fabric of the Abbey. John of York (1203–1211), like his predecessor Ralph, had been a novice at Fountains, and had passed thence to the abbacy of a daughter house. He was recalled to the Abbey from Louth Park. John was a good man, of whom but one complaint has found its way into the chronicle: some envious persons said that he desired to be a bishop. This aspersion, however, seems to have been due chiefly to his unusual grace of manner, and to his large and liberal administration. Bred, though he was, in the monastery, and getting absolutely no-

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Fountains Abbey.
The Interior looking West.

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thing—as the chronicler assures us—from his native place but his name, he appears nevertheless to have been acquainted with the world. He was a hospitable person—*Dapsilis in mensa, communis in victu*—and excelled in magnificence all who had preceded him. The King of England, at that moment, was of the same name as the abbot; whom, however, he resembled in no other particular. King John perceived the great wealth of the religious houses, especially of the Cistercians, and began to lay hold of it with a rapacious hand. But Abbot John, partly by courtly manners, partly by his prudent use of the Abbey's money, won the King's favour, and was thereby enabled to aid other houses in distress.

It may have been this general danger, and the comparative immunity of Fountains in the midst of it, which at this time greatly increased the monastic household. There were now so many brethren that the choir was too small for them,

and there were not altars enough. Abbot John, accordingly, conceived the idea of rebuilding and vastly enlarging the east end of the church. To him is commonly ascribed the plan of the new chancel, and of the chapel of the nine altars. He had already laid the foundations of these splendid structures, to the amazement of his contemporaries, and had raised certain columns, when in the midst of his work he died—*feliciter migravit ad Dominum*.

The second John (1211–1220) took up the great task and carried it forward. The chronicle has now come to an end, and we know nothing from its pleasant pages about this John or his successors. There is, however, a letter in existence which was written to him nine days after Magna Charta, by King John himself, in which the king directs that certain treasures hidden by him for safe keeping at the Abbey—*vasa, pocalia, aureae t argenta*—be now immediately and private-

lysent back. King John, in anticipation of trouble, had trusted the monks of Fountains. Now, expecting peace, he takes his valuables into his own house. Abbot John soon came into relation with the other great actor in the Magna Charta matter, for in 1220 he was made bishop by Stephen Langton. Thus he removed from Fountains to Ely, where he died five years after, and was buried in the choir of his cathedral, wearing his episcopal ring, clad in his robes, and having beside him his stout pastoral staff.

John of Kent (1220–1247) succeeded John of Ely. He splendidly completed (*gloriose consummavit*) the great beginnings of his predecessors. The chapel of the nine altars and the great infirmary were finished in his time. So were the new choir, and a reconstruction of the cloister, and a guest-house—or the improvement of the existing guest-houses —and a new paving of the church floor

in tiles of a geometrical design. This abbot built also the bakehouse, and the bridge. Leland, in 1541, speaks of many shafts of black marble in the chapel of the nine altars, in the chapter-house and in the refectory; and Mr Walbran traces the stone to the Abbey lands at the upper end of Nidderdale, and to the hand of a prosperous stone-worker of that neighbourhood, Thomas *Marmorius de Sallay*.

Thus the completed Abbey stood in splendour, the work of a whole century: part of it done while Henry and Stephen and Henry Plantagenet were ruling England, while Becket was Archbishop of Canterbury; part of it done in the reigns of John and the third Henry, in the time of Stephen Langton.

CHAPTER III

THE DAILY LIFE OF THE MONKS

THE completed monastery had a stout stone wall about it, for security and peace. It enclosed an area of about four hundred yards in width, and more than twice that space in length. The longer reaches of the wall ran through high fields and woods on either side of the valley. At each end it crossed the river: at the west end was the main gate.

Beside this gate stood the gate-house. Abbot Huby, in the sixteenth century, built a house here and established in it Robert Dawson and Ellen his wife; Robert to be porter and Ellen to be laundress. Robert was to keep the gate; and Ellen was to wash or cause to be washed (*lavabit vel lavari faciet*) the linen sheets (*linthiamina*) of the abbot

and abbey guests, and to do it without unnecessary tearing—*congrue et honeste sine lesione voluntaria vel ruptura eorumdem*. The fact, however, that at Citeaux there was an outer as well as an inner gate-house, suggests that Abbot Huby was but erecting a new lodge in the place of an old one. Here, at the outer gate, long before Robert Dawson's day, the almoner dispensed his daily alms. Here the porter, at the sound of a knock, rose up crying, *Deo gratias*, an expression of joy at an opportunity to be hospitable; met the guest, blessing him with a *Benedicite*, and hastened to inform the abbot of his arrival.

The abbot led the visitor along the road, having the river on his right and the high bank on his left, until they came to the little chapel, built in the twelfth century, a part of whose west wall remains, with a round-headed window. There they said a prayer, after which the hospitaller took the guest in charge. The

stables and barns were probably hereabouts. The mill is still standing, across the river, being now used as a dairy-house; but most of the present structure belongs to the thirteenth century. The bakehouse and the malthouse, a hundred yards to the east, supplied the brethren with bread and beer; their ovens and vats may be traced amidst the ruins.

Through the great gate, the visitor passed into the presence of the Abbey itself. There, across a wide expanse of green, stood the buildings of the cloister group: on the left, the church; then the long range of the cellarium; and on the right, the guest-houses.

I. THE GUEST-HOUSES

The guest-houses had the river on two sides, being set in a sharp angle of the stream. On the north a wall led from the river to the western guest-house, and was continued to the eastern, making

two secluded courts. Close to the corner of the eastern house a door opened in the wall, through which the hospitaller led his guest into the inner court. There at his feet rose a great staircase which gave access to the second storey of that house. From the upper landing of these stairs a bridge led to the second storey of the other house.

The two houses may have been for the use of different classes of visitors, in a day when social distinctions were scrupulously drawn. In that case, the better people were probably lodged in the eastern house. There, entering the upper storey, they found their sleeping-rooms, with deep-set windows looking to the north and east; and with two good fireplaces, one in the middle of the east wall, the other in the gable end to the north. In these rooms was never a bed, a table, a stool or a candlestick which had been made by a machine. All had come from the hands of craftsmen who brought

to their labour a determining quality of personal interest. Descending into the courtyard, a door near the north end brought the guest into the great hall—"a goodly brave place much like unto a church"—where a central row of fair pillars upheld a vaulted roof. This was for the ceremonies of the table. The arrangement of the western guest-house was according to the same plan, with two differences: it was L-shaped, the letter being turned about so that the base lay by the river, while the shaft extended to the north; and the hall, which was in the base of the L, was divided into two rooms. The northern wing may have been the kitchen for both houses. A small building by the river, where the two guest-houses met, may have been the office of the hospitaller.

These houses were a hostelry, wherein decent wandering persons, "both noble, and gentle, and what degree soever that came thither as strangers," were

made welcome and given free entertainment. This was the Abbey inn, known to all instructed wayfarers. In a day when towns were far apart, and the roads bad and beset with peril, the sight of a monastery tower in the late afternoon was pleasant to a traveller's eyes. In the guest-house hall he ate; in the guest-house chamber he slept; and on the following morning, after mass, refreshed and blessed, he went upon his way, thanking God for monks and monasteries.

II. THE CELLARIUM

The long range of building, extending from the church to the river, was called the cellarium, because it was under the general charge of the cellarer or steward of the monastery. It is likely that he had his office in the room which stands out from this building at the middle of its length. In this chamber, having a good window to the west, and a fireplace between two narrow windows to

the south, he kept his office hours. St. Benedict himself, in his rule, had counselled all cellarers to be punctual in this matter, that nobody be kept waiting.

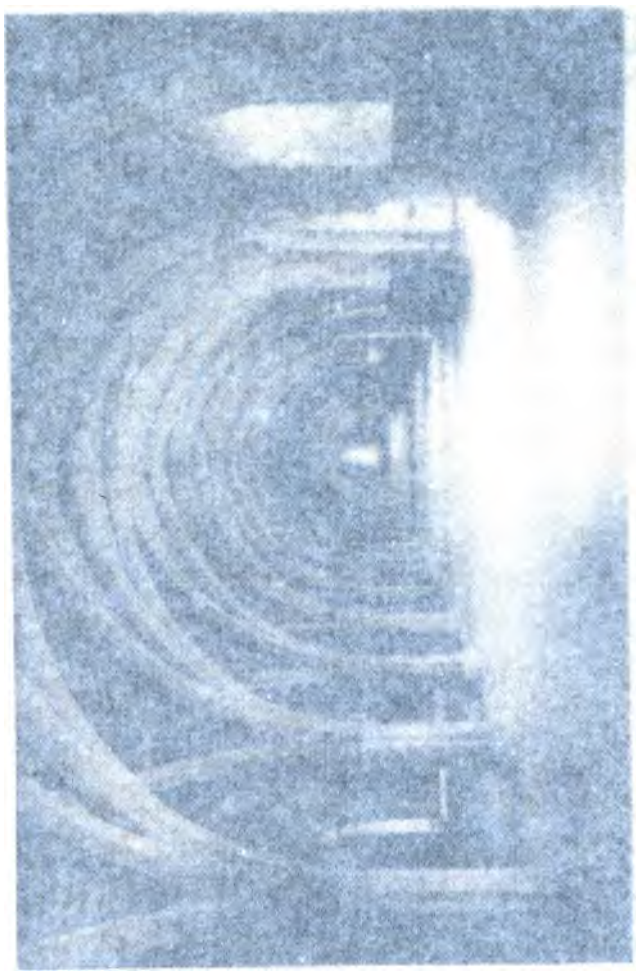
The great vaulted hall, now open from end to end, was then divided into five rooms by screens and partitions. The first room included the first two bays of the north end. Instead of pillars, it had in the midst two piers of masonry supporting a staircase, which ascended out of the church into the room above. These piers made this a double room, whereof the western half served as a vestibule to the church, while the eastern half, once opening from the cloister, may sometime have been the treasury, as at Durham.

The second room began at the southern pier and extended to the fourth pillar, thus including four bays. This was probably the storehouse for the domestic supplies of food and drink. A door in the west wall opened conveniently upon the outer court.

The third room was between the fourth pillar and the sixth. It had a door in its south wall, and appears to have been the buttery.

The wall which crossed at the sixth pillar ran between two doors, an outer door into the court and an inner door into the cloister. Thus this fourth room served as an entrance way. Its southern wall had the eighth pillar in the middle of it, and this bay beside the entrance may have been the outer parlour, the *auditorium juxta coquinam*, or room beside the kitchen, which was provided for in the Cistercian arrangements. Here in a niche of the east wall, now blocked, the porter sat beside the cloister door. In this room the brethren of the Abbey met their friends who lived in the world; here merchants came to show their wares.

All the rest of the hall, from the eighth pillar to the end over the river, was open then as it is now, and served as the refectory of the lay brothers. They came



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The Cloisters.

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in by the door in the west wall between the eighth and ninth pillars; their tables were set along the side walls under the windows; their cups and plates may have been kept in cupboards against the blank wall of the last two bays in the south-west corner; their food came in from the abbey kitchen by a hatch which opened opposite the outer door.

An outside stairway—the day stairs—rose beside the cellarer's office at this door, and led to the dormitory of the lay brothers. At the north end of the dormitory another stairway—the night stairs—went down into the church. At the south, a room at right-angles, over the river, where they made their toilet, gave access to the infirmary where they went when they were sick, and in which they lived in peace and Christian comfort when they were old.

The lay brothers were monks, like the others, in that they were subject to the usual monastic vows, amenable to

the regulations of monastic life, and clad in a habit; but they were quite distinct from their brethren of the choir and cloister. At the beginning of monasticism, most of the monks were laymen. They had separated themselves not only from the world but from the church. They believed that the deserts were better places for prayer than any sanctuary builded by the hand of man. They felt that they could best draw near to God, each in the silence of his own soul. In an age whose faith was in salvation by services, they turned their back on all the services. In an institutional time, when it was commonly accounted essential to be in the communion of the church, the monks were individualists. The fact is written in the letters of their name. A monk—*monos*—is a man who lives alone. The time came when a monk was never, under any circumstances, alone; but at the beginning he was a solitary person, living his own life by himself.

It is true that the wise church quietly and patiently followed these mystics in their wanderings, followed these enthusiasts who had forsaken the priests and the sacraments, and carried to them the altars which they had left behind, and by-and-by most of the monks were priests. But that was a long process, and during a great part of the time the convents of monks were lay fraternities, having only such priests as were needed for the rites of the church. Thus the monastic services were composed and arranged for the use of laymen. Indeed, the monasteries were never thoroughly adjusted to the conventional church system. They were never under the control of the diocesan bishop. Sometimes, they defied him openly; sometimes, they gave him the nominal office of visitor, and defied him privately. In general, he had little more authority over Benedictines or Cistercians than he has at present over Presbyterians or Methodists.

Accordingly, the lay brothers of Fountains were so named not to distinguish them from their brethren in priests' orders, but to mark a difference between them and the cloister brothers. The *conversi*, as they were called, were divided from the *monachi* not by a barrier of ordination, but by a barrier of education. They were monks who could not read. When the Cistercian Order began, there were many such persons, some of good birth, many of good ability, but ignorant of letters. It was characteristic of the Cistercians that they made a place for the piety of these men. Unable to read, they could not take part in the regular offices of monastic devotion. But they could work. They could plough and spade, they could brew and bake, they knew how to work on a farm or in a mill; at the humblest, they could fetch and carry. And these acts, the Cistercians taught, may be as religious as the recitation of a litany. So there were the lay

brothers, like St. Christopher at the ford of the river, consecrating their hands and their feet, their strength and their obedience, to God. They were sanctifying the homeliest tasks by doing them as the servants of Heaven.

The lay brothers were in the department of the cellarer, to whom they were responsible, as the cloister brothers were to the prior. They attended to the secular side of the common life. Having to work hard, they did not rise so early as the others; in summer, not till dawn. But they said prayers at night, coming down into the nave, where their stalls were ranged along on either side against the great pillars. In the day, they might recite their appointed offices, stopping in the midst of their work in the mill or in the field. When it was possible, however, they had their service in the church, chanting softly in the nave while the other monks were singing in the choir, and having

forms of their own which they had learned by heart.

III. THE CHURCH

The essential purpose for which Fountains Abbey was founded was the pursuit of religion. The prevailing interpretation which was put upon religion made it to consist, in great measure, of the saying of services. Out of the confused noises of the common street, the monks had retired into the quiet of the monastery in the hope of meeting God. And they sought God in the church.

The church had a western porch, a dozen feet in width, extending along the whole front. Part of the porch floor was made of gravestones, beneath which lay the dust of devout laymen, who had begged the privilege of being buried at the door of the house of prayer. The porch roof touched the base of the great window, which was filled with the glorious colours of the inimitable glass of the

middle ages. Over the window, in a niche, was a figure of the Mother and Child. Abbot John Darnton had this made, and inscribed his name upon the supporting corbel: an eagle, the symbol of the fourth evangelist, to mean *John*, perched on a cask or *tun*, with a scroll beneath marked *dern 1494*.

Entering beneath the Norman arch of the west door, the visitor found over his head a gallery which carried the great organ. A screen supported the gallery, making a vestibule for the church, keeping out the wind. A fragment of the base of this screen remains on the south side, near a bit of the pavement which was put in by John of Kent. Standing in the screen door and looking to the east, the high roof reached over the nave, the choir, the presbytery, and the chapel of the nine altars, to the splendour of the east window. The Norman nave and transepts, with their great pillars and round-headed clerestory windows, repre-

sent the primitive Puritan simplicity of the Cistercians. The choir and presbytery and the nine-altars chapel are in the style called Early English. The great windows, east and west, replacing plainer windows, are, like the tower, in the style called Perpendicular. To-day, by the destruction of the choir and presbytery, the whole church in its great length lies open to the view, but in the middle ages it was crossed by three stone screens.

The first partition, called the rood screen, crossed the middle alley between the seventh pair of pillars, counting from the west door. It had two openings, between which stood an altar. Over the altar, on a beam which topped the screen from pillar to pillar, was a great cross or rood. This screen formed the east end of that part of the church which was assigned to the lay brothers. On the right hand and on the left, this sanctuary was shut off from the aisles by walls, which ran along the inner side of the pillars,

making a long narrow chapel, with the stalls of the lay brothers set against them. Thus the pillars were hidden in the aisles, an observer at the west door seeing only the capitals and upper portions of them above the walls.

The second partition, called the choir screen, crossed the tenth pair of pillars, and a door in the middle of it gave access to the choir. The space between these two screens, called the retro-choir, was intended especially for aged and convalescent brethren from the infirmary. There was probably a great bench for them against the back of the rood screen.

In the midst of the retro-choir, between the eighth and ninth pairs of pillars, stood two altars, one on the north dedicated to St. Mary, and the other on the south dedicated to St. Bernard. The reredoses of these altars made a screen between the ninth pillars, having a doorway between them. In this passage, be-

tween the altars of the saints, three abbots were buried, in the fifteenth century. From the top of the two reredoses to the top of the choir screen, a loft was built, called the pulpitum, extending from the ninth and tenth pillars on the north to the ninth and tenth pillars on the south, and on the north side carried out over the aisle. Here, over the aisle, stood the choir organ.

Passing under this gallery, through the door of the choir screen, the visitor stood in the central sanctuary, the church of the monks of the cloister. On either side were twenty stalls, and against the screen, facing the east, were three stalls on the right of the entrance, and three on the left. The number of the stalls is determined by the discovery of nine earthen pots buried in the masonry which underlay them. These pots were, no doubt, as in several other churches, an acoustic experiment. The distances between them indicate how many there

were in the whole range. In front of the stalls of the monks were lower seats for the novices. In addition to the entrance through the choir screen, there were two other ways of access, at the east end of the stalls, on either side. Here is still on either side a stone step, significantly worn. On the north side, stairs led to a high seat over the door. In the middle alley, where the lecturn may have stood at which the lessons were read at matins, an abbot was buried.

The presbytery, or chancel, began at these choir doors, and was raised a step or two. Across the long space of its shining floor stood the third partition, called the altar screen. Against it was the high altar.

Thus the church was divided into three churches; one for the brothers of the cellarium, ending at the rood screen; one for the infirmary brethren, ending at the choir screen; one for the brethren of the cloister, ending at the altar

screen. On the two sides of this threefold sanctuary ran long aisles, from the west wall to the chapel of the nine altars. In the middle of this distance, the aisles opened into transepts, north and south. The nave aisles, at first unobstructed for passage around the church, were presently cut up by cross partitions into chapels; but the choir aisles continued to be used as ambulatories. The transepts served as antechambers for the chapels which opened out from them to the east.

Each transept had originally three of these chapels, but the building of the new chancel had taken away the inner one on each side. Of the two which thus remained, the outer chapel of the north transept had been changed into a storehouse when the tower was built, so that only the chapel which was in the middle remained. Over the door, under a bracket, is still to be read an inscription which informs us that it was dedicated to the Archangel Michael.

The north transept ended in the noble tower of four storeys, the third of which was probably for the bells, whilst the second may have served as the sleeping-room of the men who rung them. The inscriptions which ran round the outside of the tower are still in great part legible.

"Blessed be the name of Jesus Christ," said the stones above.

"Blessing and wisdom and honour and power be to our God for ever"; "To the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, be honour and glory for ever," said the middle lines.

"To God alone, to Jesus Christ, be honour and glory for ever," was thrice repeated, east and north and west, below.

The words were part in praise, part in apology. The beautiful tower was forbidden by the ancient regulations of the Order. The Cistercian chapel was to have but a modest tower, rising no more than a single storey over the roof. These high parapets were a symbol of the pride

of life: they indicated that the ambitions of the outer world had successfully invaded the monastery. Not so! cried the abbot who built them, repeating again and again in great letters on the tower the assertion that it was raised solely for God's glory.

In the south transept, out of which, in the south-west corner, stairs led up to the dormitory of the monks, the chapel which was originally the middle one of three, was turned into a sacristy; and a narrow door in the south wall gave access to a large room built against the chancel, which may have been the office of the sacrist. In the sacristy, and in other safe places, were kept the Abbey treasures. Here were the copes which the monks wore when they went in procession, on great days. At the time of the suppression, when an inventory was taken, there were eighty of them. Six were made of cloth of gold, twenty-six of white damask, four of white velvet,

two of white fustian. Five old copes were of embroidered work, and six of flowered work. One was "very well wrought with images"; one, wrought with images, was of green damask; six were of red silk, worked with flowers and stars; one was of black velvet. Some of these splendid cloaks may have been given by noble benefactors out of their own wardrobes. For Richard of the Lion Heart presented to the prior of Durham his Parliament robe "of blue velvet, wrought with great lions of pure gold"; whilst Queen Philippa, making a visit to Ely, gave the prior her "jewelled robes of State, powdered with golden squirrels."

Here, also, hung surplices, and eucharistic vestments of cloth of gold and silk and velvet and serge. Here the abbot may have kept his two mitres, one for common days, the other for high feasts; but both of them shining with plates of silver, and garnished with pearls. Each had its cushion; a word which the writer

of the inventory laboriously spelled "qweshan." Here were processional crosses; chalices and patens reserved for great festivals; shrines to be borne about the church on the festival of Corpus Christi, one containing a rib of St. Lawrence, another a bit of St. Anne's scalp set in a plate of silver; and an image of St. James, and another of our Lady, both of silver-gilt; a table, or reredos, for the high altar at great services, bearing three images of silver-gilt, embellished with gold and precious stones; and, most precious of all, a cross of solid gold, set with gems, and having in it a piece of the true cross of Calvary.

The "chapel of nine altars" had seven of these holy tables against its east wall, the three which would naturally have stood under the great window being combined into one. Each altar had its aumbry or closet for the sacred vessels, and was parted from its neighbour by a low barrier of wood, while a similar wall

ran along the front of the whole row, with doors admitting to the altars. There was a gallery over the altar screen which parted the chapel from the presbytery; and a little gallery over the door in the south-west corner, which was connected by a long overhead passage with the abbot's lodgings. It is likely that at Fountains, as at Durham, there was a closet against the south wall, where at the time of saying mass the sacristan provided the monks with bread and wine for their various altars.

Having thus examined the church, we may imagine ourselves at service in it upon some high occasion. The lay brothers in their brown gowns are in their stalls. The monks are in their places in the choir. They are dressed in white woollen cassocks, tied with a black girdle, and have over breast and back a scapulary—a straight breadth of black cloth before and behind, the two pieces fastened at the shoulders. Over

this plain garb, each monk now wears one of the gorgeous copes of the sacristy. There are two candles on the high altar, and behind them is the tablet with the three images, probably our Lord on the Cross, with St. Mary on one side and St. John on the other, with "beads and plate of silver-gilt, and some part gold and set with stones." Back of the altar, suspended high against the screen and falling to the floor, is a tapestry hanging, of Arras work. The holy table is spread with white damask embroidered with flowers. On a shelf in a carved recess of the south wall are a basin and ewer for washing the priest's hands; a boat-shaped vessel for incense, with a spoon; two cruets, a pair of silver censers, and a chalice and a paten for the bread and wine. Over the head of the celebrant as he prays hangs a silver basin in which burns a candle. All these things were in the Abbey when the final inventory was made.

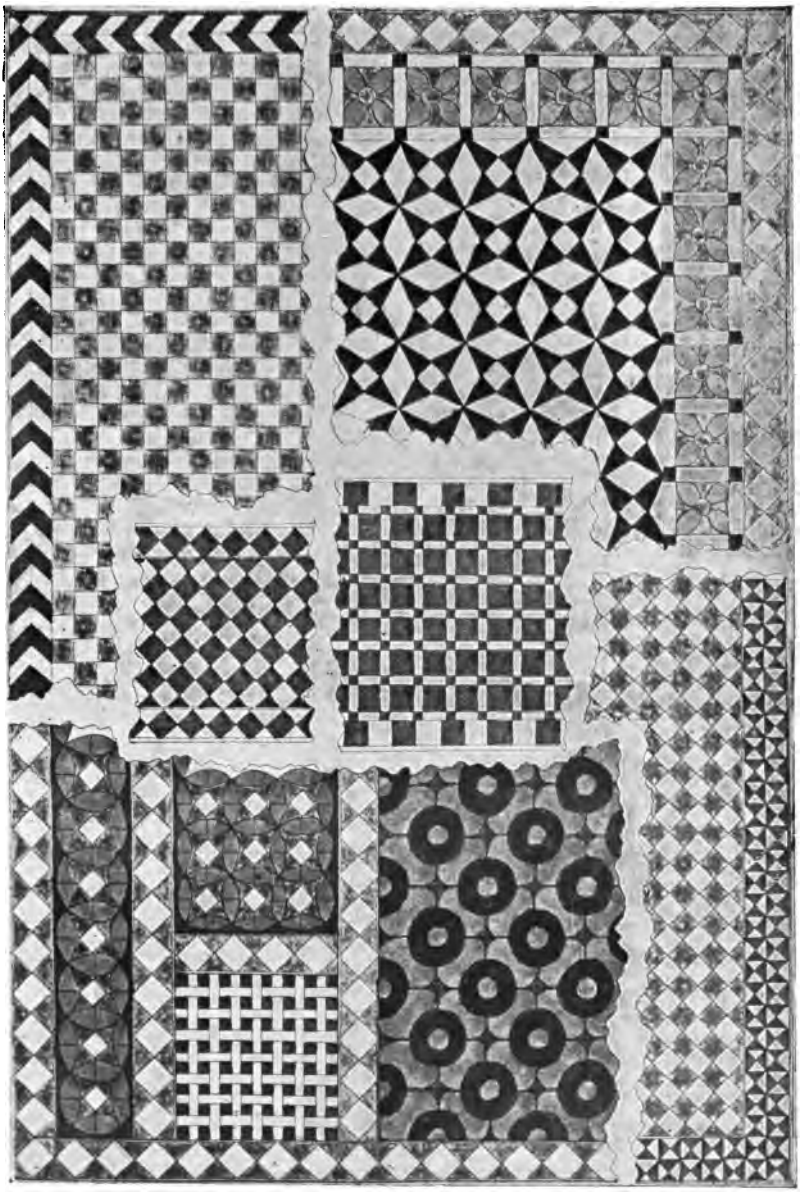
Thus the service begins; the commemoration of the supreme self-sacrifice. The smoke of incense drifts across the light of the east window; and there is a sound of chanting, imploring, adoring voices. Hands are outstretched to receive the mystic bread and wine. And presently they go out to undertake again their homely tasks in the name of Him to whom belong the church and themselves.

To these repeated acts of worship, the monks came with a faith which asked no questions. The services, it is true, were very frequent, and human nature was with them what we know it to be with us; the thoughts of the brethren would sometimes wander, and the devout words would be words only. They were of our own kin and kind. Thomas Kydde and Lawrence Benne, and Henry Jackson and John Walworth, and their fellows who were here at the time of the suppression had their bad and their good, as

we have, and in about the same proportion. They were trying, the best way they knew, to magnify the good, to make the ideal real, and to gain the approbation of God. In the church they found assistance. There it was, with doors open, day after day; its aisles fragrant with holy associations, as with the incense of the prayers of the saints; its shining altars, its appealing music, its mute assurance of divine nearness. To it they brought their trials, their perplexities, their hopes, their aspirations, their resolutions. It was the house of prayer and the sanctuary of blessing. It was the heart of their life.

IV. THE CLOISTER

Out of the nave, near the south transept, a door opens into the cloister. At the corner, where nave and transept met, is the pedestal which held a bowl for holy water. Here the brothers stopped to dip their fingers and sign their foreheads with



Principal Patterns of the Roman Floors at Fountains Abbey

From a print by Wm. Fowler of Winterton

To face p. 72

the sign of the cross. The green cloister court, without, had a porch about it on its four sides, and these covered places, whose width is now indicated by the grading of the turf, were called walks.

In the west walk, against the cellarium wall, sat the novices, busy with their books, studying church music and grammar and theology. Apt students, when they became monks, were sometimes sent to complete their education at Oxford, where they lived in the Cistercian Abbey of Bewley (founded in 1280), or in the Cistercian College of St. Bernard, now St. John's (founded in 1432). There they learned to preach, and teach some simple theology to the novices who succeeded them. There they learned also to interpret and apply the canon law: they became the lawyers of the monastery.

It is likely that Fountains, like other great houses, maintained a grammar school for the sons of the neighbours. The master of such a school would not

be a monk but a secular person, employed by the Abbey but not a member of the family. The school-house has not been identified. The building which once stood across the river at the south end of the cellarium would have been conveniently placed for this purpose. A glimpse of the discipline of such a school is had in the fact that, in the sixteenth century, a schoolmaster, receiving his degree of bachelor of arts, was presented with a birch as a symbol of his office, and was required forthwith, in the presence of his examiners, to flog a boy hired for that exercise.

Over the roof of the east walk, a line of windows opened out of the dormitory. This was a long room, with two rows of beds from end to end, like a ward in a hospital. The beds were provided with sheets of linsey-woolsey, and the monks lay on straw which was emptied out of its blue ticking and renewed once every year. At Durham, the custom was to

carry his blue bed to the brother's funeral, and hold it as a canopy over the grave during the service; so that every night when he lay down to rest he was profitably reminded of his last sleep. The monks laid aside their scapulars, but slept in their woollen cassocks, so that they woke ready dressed. The day stairs to the dormitory are in the south-east corner of the cloister. There was a room at the head of the stairs, extending south to the end of the dormitory, which may have corresponded to the master's chamber in a like position in a school. Here the prior may have slept with an attentive ear for any breach of order. It is uncertain whether there were partitions between the beds, or whether the brethren were denied even such scanty privacy as that. It is plain that they had no "cells." The building which opened at right angles with the dormitory beside the river was the toilet room, the *necessarium*. Through its hall communica-

tion was had with the abbot's lodgings. The abbot, according to rule, must sleep in the common dormitory. He probably gave this regulation a liberal interpretation, as the house grew great, and considered that this hall made his room "constructively" a part of the chamber of the monks.

At two o'clock in the morning a great bell rang in the tower, and a little bell in the dormitory answered it. Then every brother bestirred himself. He threw a cloak about him, thrust his feet into his shoes, and descended the night stairs at the end of the room into the dark church.

The night service, called matins, consisted of a reading of many lessons and a chanting of many psalms, and was performed to the accompaniment of the organ. A light burned before the high altar, and there was a light in the loft at the organ, and another for the reader at the lecturn, perhaps still another at the chant-book of the precentor. But other-

wise the great church was in darkness. The psalms were sung from memory. Now and then some one went about among the singing brothers to make sure that no man slept. This lasted for an hour or more.

After this service, the monks came out into the north walk of the cloister, where cressets flamed uncertainly against the walls, and there continued until dawn, reading or meditating, but having their hoods well pulled back from their faces to make it evident that they were wide awake. This study-hour was, of course, short in summer, but long in winter. When the weather was very bad, they sought refuge in the chapter-house. In some cloisters there was glass in the open stone-work of the porch; but, at best, this was a cold place of an early morning. The dormitory was cold, the church was cold, and the cloister was as cold as the sky; but they were used to it, like all their neighbours.

This north walk was the living-room and study of the monastery. The books in most frequent use were kept in a case which stood in a shallow recess still to be seen in the transept wall. Others were stored in two capacious closets on either side of the chapter-house door. Every year, at the beginning of Lent, all the books of the monastery were spread out on a carpet on the floor of the chapter-house, and a general accounting was had. A roll was called of brothers and of books. Each monk rose at the sound of his name, produced the book which had been assigned to him the year before, and returned it, humbly confessing if he had not read it through. Then the books were newly distributed and charged. At Ripley Castle, bound in an octavo volume, are several of the Fountains books: a Latin grammar, some sermons and some music, and a paraphrase of Ovid, in which that irresponsible writer is made to serve as a

mediæval moralist. There is also a fragment of a book on medecine, to which they might profitably have added, as at Meaux Abbey, a book on eating,—*De Edendo.* No catalogue remains, but we can guess at the titles from the lists of other mediæval libraries. There were writings of the fathers, ancient and modern, with a pretty full set of the works of St. Bernard; and several commentaries on the Bible; and a good deal of biography, mostly ecclesiastical; and books on law and ritual.

So the brethren sat in the cold cloister reading their good books. The Benedictines, who were scholars and literary persons, provided by rule that these precious manuscript volumes should be handled with becoming care. "When the religious are engaged in reading in cloister or church, they shall if possible hold the books in their left hands, wrapped in the sleeve of their tunics, and resting on their knees."

Who were these men? Whence had they come? and why?

As for their origin, they belonged, so far as we can now discover, to the same class from which the ministry is still mainly recruited: to the great company of those who are neither rich nor poor, who neither earn their living by their hands nor inherit the means of living from their fathers, represented in mediæval England by the gentry, as distinguished on the one side from the peasantry, and on the other side from the aristocracy.

As for their motive, each had his own. "What are you here for, Bernard?"—the great saint of the Cistercians had the question written on his wall. *Ad quid venisti, Bernarde?* To this inquiry the abbey might have returned as many as fifty different answers. Some of the white-gowned men came in pure love of God, deeming a life of continual prayer the most blessed of all lives, delighting in it

men? Whe
by?

Fountains Abbey.
From the South East.

Mail

all, finding in the cloister the four-square city of God which is pictured in the Book of the Revelation. Some came from love of leisure, or of simple peace and quiet: the worse ones, disposed to be respectably idle; the better, finding the outer world too boisterous for their gentle souls. Some came because they were disappointed; some because they had failed; some because they had suddenly seen the emptiness of common life, the baseness of much of it, the flagrant evil of some of it, and had come out of it that they might live to a good purpose.

Thus Ralph, the seventh abbot, had begun life as a soldier. He was a contemporary of Robin Hood, who in the ballad met a friar of Fountains and by him was soundly ducked in the middle of the little river. Richard of the Lion Heart was at that time ruling England after his fashion. Men were marching across Europe to the Holy Land. The profession of arms must have appealed

strongly in those days to the heroic, and even to the religious nature of many men. But Ralph did not like it. It displeased him much. And one day, coming to Fountains, where his father had already become a monk, he consulted a lay-brother, whose name was Sunnulph, *homo simplex et illiteratus* but wise in the counsels of God. And presently, the soldier and the brother each had a dream in the same day. The knight dreamed that he was in a church, and that the figure on the crucifix cried saying, "Why do you not come? Why do you wait?" To which he replied with tears, "Behold, Lord, I come!" The monk, sleeping in the long dormitory over the storehouse, saw the soldier dressed in a monastic habit. So Ralph became a monk, and presently an abbot.

The possibility of that promotion brought some men into the monastery. In a world hopelessly divided into classes, the monastery was the residence

of democracy. Here the humblest man, if he could but read and write, might rise as he deserved, to be the kitchener, the hospitaller, the sacrist, the cellarer; some day—who could tell?—the abbot, wearing a mitre, consorting on terms of equality with the noblest in the realm, ruling his fellow men.

But here are the brethren sitting in the chill cloister, reading their good books, and awaiting the day. At the first light the bell rang and they went again into the church for the psalms of lauds. After that, they returned to the dormitory and washed their hands and faces in the room over the river. By this time the sun was fairly up, and the hour was come for the psalms of prime. The first psalm, according to the gracious arrangement of St. Benedict, they said very slowly, in order to give late-comers time to get in. Prime was followed by mass or by chapter meeting, the order differing with the season of the year. The monastic

year was in two parts: winter began on September 14, being Holy Cross day, a date still used in the Prayer-Book for determining the autumnal ember days; summer began at Easter.

Out of the church, from prime or mass, the brethren proceeded to the chapter-house. This great hall opened through three noble arches from the east walk of the cloister. Two of these arches were blocked, as it appears, by book closets; but not at the beginning. The books were probably stored at first, as in other Cistercian abbeys, in the room between the transept and the chapter-house. Afterwards this room was put to other uses.

At the further end and on the sides the brothers sat on triple tiers of stone benches. The meeting began with a reading from the monastic book of martyrs, how this brother and that in the old time had lain down his life for his Master. Then there were prayers; and sometimes

a sermon, to the hearing of which the lay brothers might be summoned. Then was read a chapter from the Rule of St. Benedict, a custom which gave its name both to the meeting and to the house in which it was held. Thus their high ideal was kept continually before them. Once a week a list was read of the household duties and of the brethren to whom they were assigned. For these homely tasks came to the monks in turn. One after another, they cooked the dinner, or waited on the table, or swept the dormitory. Finally, cases of discipline were considered.

In a life which at best was somewhat monotonous and narrow, the minor annoyances of human fellowship would easily be exaggerated. The rule of silence could not restrain the brothers from thinking; and some of the thoughts would naturally take the direction which is indicated in Browning's "Soliloquy in a Spanish Cloister." The chapter

meeting was, accordingly, a place for the summary adjustment of all the petty grievances. Brother Robert made his complaint against Brother William, and Brother William confessed or explained, and whoever was adjudged to be at fault was properly punished: sometimes by loss of precedence, sometimes by lack of dinner; in serious cases, by flogging. Down got the brother on the cold floor, paved with tombstones of past abbots, and there was soundly whipped, for the good of his soul and for the edification of the brethren. When whipping was not sufficient, he was put in prison. Under the abbot's lodgings, beneath the ground, were three convenient dungeons, in whose walls and floor are to be seen to this day the staples for the chains.

It is not likely that these dungeons were in frequent use. Many hard things were, indeed, said about the monks at the time of the suppression, but it must be remembered that they were said by

interested persons in the heat of controversy. Even then, it was agreed that in the "great and solemn monasteries," such as Fountains, religion was "right well kept." The monks were slandered that they might the more conveniently be robbed. Henry VIII. desired for various reasons, good and bad, to destroy the monasteries and take possession of their lands and treasures. He desired also, like all the Tudors, to keep the good will of the people. The royal commissioners, sent to visit the religious houses and report upon them, understood the situation and met it. They showed that the monasteries were so bad that a good nation ought to be happy to have its king suppress them. It is true that the enthusiasm for the monastic life was waning; the best men were turning their energies and finding their ideals in other directions. The strength and devotion of the people were being put into politics, into preaching, into the practical life of

the parish. Moreover, there had gradually grown up a social as well as a religious separation between the monks and their neighbours. Fountains Abbey, for example, was built, as we have seen, by the benefactions of rich and noble persons. It was on that side an aristocratic institution. It differed in this respect from the parish churches which were erected and maintained by the plain people, and especially by prosperous citizens of the mercantile order. Mr. Micklethwaite has put the situation clearly in his paper on "The Cistercian Order." "To a citizen or a franklin," he says, "a monk was a dignitary, but the parish priest was his neighbour and friend, and the parish church was his own." This fact, that the great substantial middle class were no longer deeply interested in the abbeys, not only accounts in some measure for the indifference with which they witnessed their destruction, but for the difficulty which the

monasteries found at last in getting recruits among men of this good kind. The personal quality deteriorated. There were bad monks, no doubt, as there are still bad ministers; and the few bad ones attracted more attention than all the cloistered saints. And, anyhow, the life which they were endeavouring to live was an abnormal life, apart from the wholesome influences of natural human society, and from the helpful engagements of the common routine. The monasteries inevitably degenerated. But "an enemy," as Burke said, "is a bad witness; a robber is a worse." The quiet judgment of the modern historian is in favour of the monks, and finds most of them to have been men of respectable and pious lives. The sober persons in white cassocks, who confessed faults in the chapter meeting and cheerfully suffered chastisement for them to which the man in the street gave not a moment's thought, had a passionate longing to be

good. They were intent upon the living of a righteous life.

The day's work would begin about seven o'clock. In the winter it continued until three in the afternoon, making an eight-hour day. In the summer there was a long intermission while the sun was high and hot, but two hours of it were occupied in study. During the day the church bell rang for the offices of terce and sext and nones; but these were brief services, and men who were hard at work at a distance stopped where they stood, and said them under the sky. There was a bite of breakfast called *mixtum*—a piece of bread and somewhat wherewith to wash it down—which was served before the work of the day began to those who were so old or so young as to be unfit for their tasks without it. In the summer the meal of the day was eaten at noon, and after it the brethren lay on their beds in the dormitory and slept for an hour; or, if they chose, read a book

during that time, lying down, being careful not to stretch out their feet into the passage between the beds, and turning the leaves quietly so as not to disturb their sleeping neighbours. Late in the summer afternoon there was a slight repast of bread and fruit. In the winter, until Lent, the one meal was served when the brethren came in from work; that is after three o'clock; in Lent, not until about five.

The monastic ideal of seclusion from the world demanded economic independence. Everything that was needed in the monastery was to be produced upon the premises. That, at the least, implied a garden for vegetables, and an orchard for fruit, and a field for corn with a mill in which to grind it, and ponds for fish, and woods for fuel. It meant architects, builders, masons, carpenters and plumbers. In the infirmary, which was the abbey hospital, there must be physicians and attendants. In the guest-house,

which was the abbey inn, there must be porters, hostlers, cooks. The common details of a domestic establishment of a hundred men were enough to keep many persons busy. It is true that much of the heavy work was done by the lay brothers; but every choir brother had his share also, and went out daily with axe or spade, with fishing-rod or pruning-hook, with basket or barrow, to his appointed task. The crops must be planted or garnered, the apples must be picked, the hay must be got in, the wood must be cut, the buildings must be kept in repair, horses must be shod, sheep must be shorn, and at all seasons, in all weather, and under all circumstances, dinner must be cooked.

Accordingly, after the daily mass and chapter, this substantial activity engaged the mind and muscle of the monastery. The abbot betook himself to his executive affairs, the prior and the sub-prior to their daily inspection of the establish-

ment, the cellarer to his house-keeping, the sacrist to his care of the church, the bursar to his accounts, the infirmarius to his hospital, the terrararius to his inn, the almoner to his dependents at the gate, the master of the novices to his school, the scriptor to his copying, the kitchener to his cooking, others to the fields and forests. For such as were unemployed about these matters, there was the cloister with its books, and the church with its frequent services. It is likely that there were idle monks; for the monk was of like passions with us, and was beset by the same temptations which assail us. As the Abbey increased in wealth, and the early ardour of the monastic life began to cool, there was, no doubt, a disposition to hire men to do some of the homely tasks which at first the monks had done themselves. But the ideal of the monastic life was an active day, wherein from dawn till dark there should not be an idle moment. Indolence, as St. Benedict

declared, is an enemy of the soul; and all his arrangements of time and task were made with that in mind. Eastern monasticism had two dominant notes, of pain and prayer. St. Benedict took pain out and put work in the place of it. No man was to afflict his soul or body needlessly, but every man was to devote himself, for his physical and spiritual good, to vigorous exercise. The idle monk was like the idle minister: he existed, but not often.

All the work was done, as far as was possible, in silence. Out of the east walk of the cloister, beside the chapter-house, opened the parlour. There, as the name indicates, the monks could talk. The original rule specified only the dormitory and the refectory as places wherein speech was forbidden; but silence came to be the common habit of the monastic life, its enforcement depending much upon the disposition of the abbot. The monastery was the abode of blessed stillness. Within its walls men lived in

peace and quiet. They did their tasks without conversation. They read their books, and ate their meals, thinking their own uninterrupted thoughts. They sat in the cloister, where the wind and the sun played in the grass, and were altogether undisturbed. It was not so much a penitential as a protective silence, good for the soul, and restful.

There was even a bit of quiet pleasure in the midst of these silent labours. In the south walk of the cloister, between the dormitory stairs and the refectory, was the warming house, the abbey fireside. Here, in the cold weather, the monks came to warm their hands. The abbot had a fire-place of his own; the cellarer had one in his office; and the infirmary and the guest houses were cheerfully warmed; but the common brotherhood had but this one hearth. Here was concentrated all the heat of the place, in the huge fire-places. One of these great openings is now blocked, having been

disused before the suppression, when the number of monks was growing smaller, but the other is still ready for a load of logs, whose smoke would pour out of the tall chimney. Two large openings in the west wall gave some heat to the refectory. Here, in the warming house, in Advent, the brothers kept a "solemn banquet" of "figs and raisins, cakes and ale," of whose celebration at Durham it is said that there was "no superfluity or excess, but a scholastical and moderate congratulation amongst themselves." A door in the south-west corner opened upon a little court; the woodhouse stood in the eastern part of it, and a wooden bridge, from the refectory corner, led across the river. Over this bridge came the stout brothers in their gowns of brown or white, their arms full of wood. At Durham, near the warming house, there was a garden and a bowling alley.

The muniment room at Studley Royal contains among its treasures a

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Fountains Abbey.
From the South West.

book of accounts of the bursar, kept in the time of Abbot Grenewell (1442–1471). There it appears that they had "a pair of clavichords" at the Abbey—the piano-forte of the Middle Ages. This would seem to imply domestic music. Somebody must have played, while the brethren stood about and sang. There are also various records of fees paid to persons who went about the country from abbey to castle, from manor-house to market-square, for the entertainment of their neighbours. Minstrels came from Beverley, with those of Lord Arundell, of Lord Beaumont, of Lord Fitzhugh, even of the King; who not only sang but acted as conjurers, gymnasts, contortionists, and variety showmen. Sometimes the audience of the Abbey was given to a story-teller—*fabulator*—"the story-teller of the Earl of Salisbury"; with selections from the Hundred Merry Tales or the *Gesta Romanorum*. Players came from Thirsk and

Ripon. Sometimes the entertainer was a jester, or, as they said, a fool. One of the bursar's items shows a payment of fourpence "to a fool called Solomon (who came again)." These diversions would perhaps be given on the cellarer's terrace; that is, in the space to the west of the cellarium, which was once enclosed within a wall, from the church porch to the cellarer's office.

One of Abbot Grenewell's purchases was a great clock, made by John Ripley, and probably set in the south transept of the church. In the middle of the hot day in summer, after the service of sext, and late in the afternoon in winter, after nones, when the clock pointed to the proper hour, a bell in the cloister rang for dinner; either a bell or a board struck with a mallet. Outside the refectory door, on either hand, were stone troughs with running water from the river. In the middle of the cloister is a great stone bason. When that welcome sound was

heard, the brothers washed their hands in the troughs or in the bason, wiping them on a roller towel which hung beside the door. Then they entered their noble dining-hall, lofty as a church, with ceiling of wood and floor of stone, wainscoted above the height of a man's head, and having down the midst a row of marble pillars. At the end opposite the door, and along the wall on both sides, were stone benches, and in front of them were tables of oak, covered with linen cloth. The prior commonly presided, the abbot dining in his own lodgings. All stood in silence till the prior was in his place, and remained standing while he rang a little bell during a time sufficient for the saying of the fifty-first psalm. When the bell stopped, the priest of the week said grace, and they all sat down.

In the fair gallery of stone in the west wall, deeply recessed and lighted by great windows, reached by a short flight of stone steps, the reader stood to ac-

company the silent meal with words of Holy Scripture and of ancient authors. The kitchen adjoined the refectory on the west, having its great ovens in the middle of the room, and entered from the refectory by a service door which had a round revolving shelf across the middle of it. Between the door to the gallery and the door to the kitchen there was perhaps a sideboard; and in the corners toward the cloister were cupboards for cups and plates and spoons, each provided with a sink. There were forty-five silver spoons here when the inventory was made, but only three small cups or mazers, and one big one, of silver. This would appear to indicate that the cups and plates were of some cheap material and not worth counting.

The bill of fare showed bread and vegetables and fruit and fish. Sometimes there was meat, but this was cooked in the kitchen of the infirmary, and served in the misericord, or House of Merciful

Meals. No flesh which had ever walked about upon four feet was dressed in the cloister kitchen or served in the cloister refectory. But fowls were eaten, and eggs were a staple of monastic diet. The monks had wine and beer for drink, according to the custom of the country. In the book of signs—*De Signis*—which shows how the monks of Ely indicated their wishes at the silent table, four gestures are set down to mean beer: signifying good beer, *bona servisia*, small beer, *mediocris servisia*, smaller beer, *debilis servisia*, and a very common beer called *skagmen*. In the "Mirroure of Our Ladye," the sister of Sion House who desired an apple was directed to "put thy thumb in thy fist, and close thy hand, and move afore thee to and fro"; for milk, "draw thy left little finger in the manner of milking"; for mustard, "hold thy nose in the upper part of thy right fist, and rub it"; for salt, "philip with thy right thumb and his forefinger over the left thumb";

for wine, "move thy forefinger up and down upon the end of thy thumb before thine eye." A dinner to the accompaniment of these cheerful communications, while one read aloud from a good book, may well have been a pleasant meal.

At Ely, during the week beginning August 5, 1336, the brethren of the monastery had on Sunday eggs, chickens, pigeons and dripping; on Monday, pottage and cod; on Tuesday, fresh meat and mutton; on Wednesday, fresh fish, white herring and cod; on Thursday, fresh meat, white herring and cod; on Friday, white herring and cod; and on Saturday, dripping, milk, white herring and cod.

When Abbot Grenewell went to attend the assizes at York, as he did in 1455, at the March session of the court, he dined the first day on fish alone; on the second day, having guests at his table, he added salt and mustard to the fish; on the third day, fish was served with figs, raisins and

gingerbread; the fare of the fourth day was like that of the second, and the fifth day followed the third. With this were bread and beer and wine.

Monastic meals, though monotonous, were wholesome; and there was a good deal of variety in the preparation of the fish. St. Bernard, in his day, complained of the ingenuity with which eggs were cooked in religious houses. "Who can describe," he cries, "in how many ways the very eggs are tossed and tormented, with what eager care they are turned over and under, made soft and hard, beaten up, fried, roasted, stuffed, now served minced with other things, and now by themselves! The very external appearance of the thing is cared for, so that the eye may be charmed as well as the palate." As the monasteries increased in wealth, there would be a constant temptation to dine more abundantly. Eating is not only one of the earliest but one of the most universal of arts, and no cook

nor convert could completely resist its allurements. For the most part, however, the abbey fare was fit food for soldiers, for men in training for a war with Satan.

Thus the silent meal progressed, the level voice of the reader at his desk in the gallery, accompanying the cheerful sounds of honest eating and drinking. No brother was permitted to leave until the meal was ended, nor walk about while his companions were eating. Neither was he allowed to wash his cup with his fingers, though he might wipe it with his hand. He was forbidden to wipe either his hands or his knife on the table-cloth, —until he had first cleansed them on his bread. When he helped himself to salt it must be with his knife; when he drank, he must hold the cup with both hands. "Eyes on your plates, hands on the table, ears to the reader, heart to God": thus ran the rule. Then the prior rang a sharp note on his bell. If the great mazer of silver with a gilt band, which is mentioned

in the inventory, was a grace cup, then it was at this moment that it went its round, each brother lifting it to his lips, holding its two handles. Then, two by two, they marched into the church and said the miserere psalm.

Out of the cloister, in the south-east corner, between the parlour and the day-stairs to the dormitory, a passage led to the buildings which lay beyond. The beginning of this passage crossed a long room which extended to the south, whose central line of pillars upheld the dormitory floor. The ceiling was low and the windows were at the south end, so that its use is not apparent. It may have been the chamber of the novices; it may have been the tool-house. It may have been an office or checker, wherein the master of the warming house kept his hogshead of wine, and his spices, figs and walnuts, with which to mitigate the austerities of Lent. Or the chamberlain may have used it, whose charge was to furnish the

brethren with linsey-woolsey for their shirts and sheets; in which case, the tailor may have sat in the light of the south windows, mending frayed scapularies and darning holes in cowls and gowns.

The passage led into a gallery, with open arcading of stone on either side, and a second storey over. Out of the gallery, to the right, opened the abbot's lodgings, where a long hall gave entrance into several rooms. Beside the door a stairway rose to the upper chambers, which appear to have been large and light, with comfortable fireplaces, and oriel windows looking out to east and south over the river. In one of these rooms, or in the misericord which was connected with this building by a hall, the abbot dined with visitors of state. Here, at the time of the inventory, were two gilded basins of silver, three silver ewers, eight "standing pieces" with covers, nine "flat pieces," all of silver, with a goblet and some spoons: so that the

abbot's stable must have presented a shining and sumptuous appearance. The open space bounded by the dormitory basement on the west, the arcaded passage on the north, the rere-dorter or necessarium on the south, and the abbot's lodgings on the east, may have been the abbot's garden, his *hortus inclusus*. Somewhere, at a convenient distance, must have been the abbot's stable for his six horses—*sex equi ad stabulum domini abbatis*,—in charge of his boy, whose russet suit cost fifteen pence. The chalice, paten and cruets which were in the abbot's house would seem to mean that one of the rooms was an oratory, with an altar. Under the abbot's lodgings were the cells for offenders.

From the north-west corner of the second story, over the entrance, a passage opened into the upper course of the long gallery. Here was a hall with many windows, warmed here and there with fire-places, extending east to the infir-

mary, north to the chapel of nine altars, and west to the dormitory. Here the abbot could walk; here, in the oriel which projected into the chapel, he could say his prayers and hear mass quite by himself. He was the only member of the monastic family who had the privilege of privacy.

The gallery is almost entirely ruined, but a comparison with the arrangements of other monastic houses suggests that the upper storey of the western part, next to the dormitory, was the library or the writing-room. Here, where there was plenty of light, the records and accounts may have been kept. Here the books may have been copied which were used in the choir, and in the cloister and in the school. The completed records, especially such as related to the abbey lands, may have been stored in the room over the warming house, now used as a museum for fragments of pottery and broken carvings found in the ruins.

This room, reached by the day stairs to the dormitory, had a bar at the door by which the occupant could lock himself in. This bar is a perplexing fact, and nobody has as yet explained why any official of the abbey should need to defend himself against intrusion in this peremptory fashion. If this was the muniment room, it held the great books of the Chartulary of Fountains, of which the volume A to C is in the British Museum. D to J is at Ripley Castle, and K to M is in the library of the late Sir Thomas Phillips. The remaining volumes are not yet traced. Here were kept the bundles of title-deeds, now at Studley Hall; with pendant seals, which show that there were neighbouring farmers who attested their signatures with impressions of Roman gems which their forefathers had turned up with the plough. The President Book would be kept here, with its dated list of abbots up to 1471; and the Coucher Book, with

its register of the dealings of the monks with their manors. These two probably lay by the abbot's side as he sat in his place in the chapter house at business meetings. They are now preserved in the muniment room at Studley Hall.

The long corridor, which connected the cloister with the infirmary, passed, as we have seen, the abbot's lodging on the right and the entrance-way to the chapel of the nine altars on the left. Opposite the chapel entrance there was an opening into the coal-yard. Coal was found here when the recent excavations were made. In the south-east corner of this yard lay the abbey rubbish heap, the materials of which were apparently shovelled out from the window beside it, whose sill shows the marks of this daily exercise. Here were found various broken dishes, a sickle blade, a copper can, bushels of oyster shells, and bones identified as belonging to beef, mutton,

pork and venison, together with a great quantity of ashes.

The room out of which this refuse was thrown is reached by a passage which opens out of the long corridor close by the infirmary door. Here, according to Mr. Walbran, stood the reservoir, fed by a lead pipe from a spring on the high bank.

The meat bones in the rubbish heap suggest the near neighbourhood of the House of Merciful Meals. This is the room which lies to the south of the reservoir and the coal-yard. A screen extended across the east end of the misericord, and there was a dais for the high table at the west end. Along the north wall are still remains of one of the stone benches. Tables stood here, as in the refectory of the cloister.

The long corridor ended at the door of the infirmary. This was a noble group of buildings, now ruined almost to the ground. There was a great hall, one of

the finest in the kingdom, with two rows of stately pillars. It had a fire-place at each end, and the aisles were divided by partitions into small rooms, some having fire-places of their own. Back of it, to the east, reached by broad stone steps, eight of which remain, stood a two-storied structure, with vaulted basement probably for domestic stores, and with upper apartments which may have served for the entertainment of guests of unusual distinction. Up these stairs, then, attended by officers of the Abbey, went the Nevilles, the Marmions, the Mauleverers, on their visits to the monastery. In the chamber above slept the abbot of Clairvaux, when he came on his round of inspection of the Cistercian houses. Adjoining this lodging, on the south, was the chapel, into which a flight of narrow stairs descended from this guest-room. The base of the altar is still *in situ*. Next the chapel, with a yard between, was the spacious kitchen, whose

great round ovens are still in place. Here, was cooked the food for the infirmary, for the misericord, and for the occupants of the lodging. A staircase beside the chapel-door seems to have led from the kitchen to the guest-room, over the arch of the entrance.

Here, in the infirmary, were gathered the old men, who had been monks for fifty years. Here the sick were cared for. Here regularly, in groups, a fourth part of the brethren at a time, came all the monks in succession for the periodical *minutio*, or letting of blood, according to the medical discipline of the time. In this comfortable seclusion they regained their strength. The doors of the infirmary were shut against the harsher regulations of the monastic life. Fires blazed on the hearth and roared up the great chimneys, and there were good things on the table at dinner time. The place was both a hospital and an old men's home. The buildings extended over the river,

which flowed in four tunnels beneath. To the north, beside the chapel of the nine altars, lay the cemetery. In this quiet place, remote from even the peaceful stir of the cloister, the monks expected to end their days. Their longest journey out of this blessed haven was when they crept along the corridor, and the nine-altars chapel, and the presbytery aisle, to their place on the stout oak bench against the back of the rood screen, to hear mass on some high festival. They awaited only one longer journey, when they should be carried out of the infirmary chapel to the green cemetery.

When the time for that last journey drew near, the abbot came to administer the sacrament, with all the brethren assembled. Then a cross of ashes was traced upon the floor, with a merciful covering of straw upon it and a quilt on that; there the sick man was laid. When the brother's breath grew faint and difficult, and it was plain that the moment of

his departure was at hand, a board in the cloister was struck repeated blows with a mallet, and all the monks hastened to their brother's side. Thus he closed his eyes, amidst the prayers of his friends, and passed from the peace of the monastery to the rest of paradise.

This quiet end of life was continually symbolised in the quiet ending of the monastic day. Late in the afternoon, the office of vespers was said in the church, somewhat elaborately, with much singing and organ-playing. After vespers, in the twilight, the monks sat in the cloister, about the refectory door, and somebody read aloud from a good book, preferably the Collations of Cassian. On Saturday afternoons during the reading, the brothers by turns sat in a row on the stone benches which were over the lavatory troughs on either side of the refectory door, and had their feet washed in the running water by the cooks of that week and of the week to come. Then the

compline prayers were said, in the summer about seven o'clock, in the winter about eight. And at the end of the service, every monk pulled his cowl over his head and went to bed.

CHAPTER IV

THE SUPPRESSION

FOR two hundred and fifty years—from the time of Abbot John of Kent, whose day ended in 1247, to the time of Abbot John, called Darnton, whose day began in 1479—no notable additions were made to the fabric of the Abbey. The energies of the brethren were directed to the diligent living of their daily life.

In Craven, the Abbey owned a hundred square miles within a ring fence; in the neighbourhood of Ripon, their lands ran in one direction for thirty uninterrupted miles. The monks of the daughter house of Kirkstead had farms in Lincolnshire, forty thousand acres of pasture land in Wildmore Fen, and property in Boston, Lincoln and London. They had tithes of the

deer in Kirkstead Chase and the swans on Witham river. They sold wool in Flanders. They maintained several large mills and an iron works. And Fountains was much richer than Kirkstead. These possessions brought heavy responsibilities, and made a great demand on the monks' time. There were tenants and title-deeds to be looked after, collections to be made, markets to be considered, with buying and selling, and the care of sheep and cattle.

In addition to these cares, the abbot was the official visitor of eleven other abbeys—the eight daughter houses, with three which had grown out of the first—and went about among them on journeys of inspection and encouragement and counsel. Also, as late as the fourteenth century, he had a seat in Parliament, where he wore his mitre and discussed the affairs of the wide world. Early in the fifteenth century he attended the Council of Constance,

where he heard Wyclif condemned and saw Hus burned. Late in the same century, when Henry VII., the last of the mediæval kings, kept St. George's Day in state at York, it was the Abbot of Fountains who read the epistle at high mass in the Minster.

This abbot was John Darnton, who resumed again the old enthusiasm for making the Abbey beautiful. He put new windows in the place of the plain old ones, in the west end of the nave, and in the chapel of the nine altars, east and north and south. After him, on the very eve of the Suppression, looking forward to centuries more of prosperity and peace, Abbot Marmaduke Huby built the noble tower.

About this time the Abbey bought a map—"a paper map of the world"—for which the bursar paid eight pence. There it hung upon the parlour wall, that all the monks might see what sort of place they lived in—a small world,

whose centre was at the altar of St. Peter's Church in Rome. But while the new glass was being put in the big new windows the tidings came that a new world had been found across the sea; and to this expansion it soon became necessary to readjust the horizons both of maps and of ideas. In the process of this readjustment the Abbey came to an end.

When the Reformation began, the abbeys were all against it. To the men of the cloister, living by rule and wonted to silence, the bold ideas of the robust prophets of the new time had a harsh and forbidding sound. Rumours of the current sayings and doings found their way into the Abbey—the farmer made report to the cellarer when he brought in his beets and onions—and the brethren shuddered to hear them, as men shake and shiver upon whom the cold wind blows around the corner after a day spent by the warm fire. In the quick-

ening contention between the old learning and the new the monks held with the past.

Thus it was also in the increasingly embittered politics of the time. At Jervaulx Abbey, on a July Sunday in 1536, a monk sharply interrupted the preacher who was maintaining that the king was the head of the Church. The monk said that he neither would nor could take the king's highness for to be the only and supreme head of the Church of England. He affirmed that the Pope was the head of the Church, and not the king. And his brethren agreed with him. That was what they held at Fountains. On one side were the king and the bishops, on the other side were the Pope and the monks. The contrast between abbey and cathedral—between the monks' church and the bishops' church,—is of like significance with the contrast between the castles of Kenilworth and Warwick. The two castles took differ-

ent sides in a great national division; and Kenilworth, which chose the side of Charles, and lost, is a battered ruin, while Warwick, which chose the side of Cromwell, and won, is a stately inhabited mansion. The abbey and the cathedral made their choice in an earlier division. It needs but a glance to tell which chose the side that was defeated.

Fountains, like the other monasteries, was ill prepared for the heavy storm. The convent had decreased in numbers. One of the fire-places in the warming-house, one of the ovens in the refectory kitchen, had been blocked up as being no longer needed. The partitions down the rows of pillars in the nave had been removed, for there were no lay brothers to sit in the long lines of stalls. Men were asking menacing questions as to the practical value of these vast establishments which were withdrawing from the general life of the nation so much wealth and strength. Parliament sup-

pressed nearly four hundred of the lesser monasteries, partly on the ground that they were places of evil living, partly on the ground that their revenues were needed for the better benefit of the people; and there were few complaints. Though the greater abbeys were expressly exempted at that time from the accusations of immoral conduct, even they could not escape the charge of rendering but a scanty and uncertain service to the community.

It was the misfortune of Fountains, at this critical time, to have an incompetent and unworthy abbot; though even a saint could not have saved the place from the hand of the spoiler. In 1530, the Earl of Northumberland appealed to Cardinal Wolsey, in behalf of the brethren of Fountains, to remove the abbot. Abbot Thirsk, he said, doth not endeavour himself like a discreet father towards the convent and the profit of the house, but hath, against the same,

as well sold and wasted the great part or all of their store in cattle, as also their woods in divers countries, neither does he maintain the service of God like to the ancient custom there. The King's commissioners, Layton and Legh, said worse things about him. They declared that he was defamed *a toto populo*. They complained that there was no truth in him, one day denying and the next confessing various sins laid to his charge. They were especially indignant because one night he took secretly out of the sacristy or treasure room a gold cross adorned with stones, and in company with a jeweller, who had come from London, whom he took into his lodgings, did abstract from the cross an emerald and a ruby, which the London jeweller bought of him, cheating the abbot badly. It is plain that the poor man was at his wit's end, sorely badgered by these insistent visitors, seeing the ruin of his holy house, and trying, if possible,

to save something out of it. Finally, he resigned his office into the hands of the commissioners, who assigned him a scanty pension. He took refuge in the Abbey of Jervaulx, where he became involved in the revolutionary proceedings of the Pilgrimage of Grace, and atoned for such misdeeds as he may have committed by being hanged at Tyburn.

Abbot Thirsk's successor, Marmaduke Bradley, was selected by the commissioners. They said that he was the wisest monk in England; and he showed that he was even as wise, as the Bible says, as a serpent, by doing what his masters bade him. In 1539, at their demand, he surrendered the Abbey to the King.

The commissioners came down from London, late in the November of that year, and called a meeting, probably in the chapter house. There they assembled the abbot and the convent and the chief people of the neighbourhood, to

whom they duly declared "the godly determination of the King's majesty to alter and change that house, with many others, from an unchristian life to a trade of virtuous and honest living." The thirty-two brethren were promised proper pensions. They were accordingly advised "to submit themselves to his Majesty's clemency and goodness, and by way of surrender to yield up into his Grace's hands their monastery, with all the lands, possessions, jewels, plate, ornaments, and other things belonging to the same." The commissioners then took possession of the convent seal, with all the keys, and made an inventory. Thus politely, and even piously, was this royal robbery effected.

The abbot betook himself to Ripon, where he held a prebendal stall. The prior and his thirty brethren were turned briskly out of doors to face the approaching winter. Despoiled of their own garments they were given suits of citizen's

clothes, and were set outside the gates of their fair paradise to make their way, as best they could, over the strange roads of the cold world.

The gold and silver of the rich altars, with all things of value such as could be moved, were put in waggons and sent to the king. Distant though the Abbey was from any town, the rumour of these proceedings would attract a crowd. And the crowd stole what they could. The servants of the commissioners, who had a better chance, stole more, according to their opportunity. They rode about in those days, from the wreck of one abbey to the ruin of another, with rich copes for travelling cloaks and chasubles for saddle cloths. The master thief was abroad, and it was a pity if the little thieves could not have a share.

Then the windows were taken out, so carefully that but a handful of the precious glass remained in all the ruins, and were disposed of, nobody knows how or

where. The bells were taken down and carried off; one to be hung, tradition says, in the cathedral tower at Ripon. Finally, the roofs were pulled off, and the lead brought into the dismantled church; and there between the great pillars, betwixt the broken altars of St. Mary and St. Bernard, in a fire whose fuel was the carved work of the choir stalls, it was melted into convenient shape for the market.

An eye-witness has left a description of the spoiling of the dependent house of Roche Abbey. "The sudden spoil fell," he says, "the same day of their departure from the house. . . . The church was the first thing that was put to the spoil, then the abbot's lodging, dorter and frater [*i.e.*, dormitory and refectory] with the cloister and all the buildings thereabout within the abbey walls. . . . The persons that cast the lead into fodders plucked up all the seats in the choir where the monks sat when they said ser-

Fountains Hall.

Fountains Hall.

vice, which were like to seats in minsters, and burned them and melted the lead therewith, although there was wood plenty within a flight-shot of them, for the abbey stood among the woods." Everybody was busy, he says, pilfering what he could and hiding it among the rocks, "so that it seemeth that every person bent himself to filch and spoil what he could." At Fountains, the ashes of such fires remained until the last century, amidst the general wreck.

The place was sold within a few months to Richard Gresham, a gentleman of London, who paid seven thousand pounds for it. In 1597, the heirs of Gresham sold it to Stephen Procter, a courtier of Elizabeth, who pulled down some of the buildings outside the cloister that he might get materials for his fine new Fountains Hall, near the west gate. His affairs falling into great confusion the place was again sold, and thereafter passed from hand to hand un-

til, in the middle of the eighteenth century, it came into the possession of William Aislabie, the owner of the neighbouring estate of Studley Royal. From whose granddaughter, Miss Lawrence, it passed by will to the Earl de Grey, the uncle of the present owner, the Marquess of Ripon.

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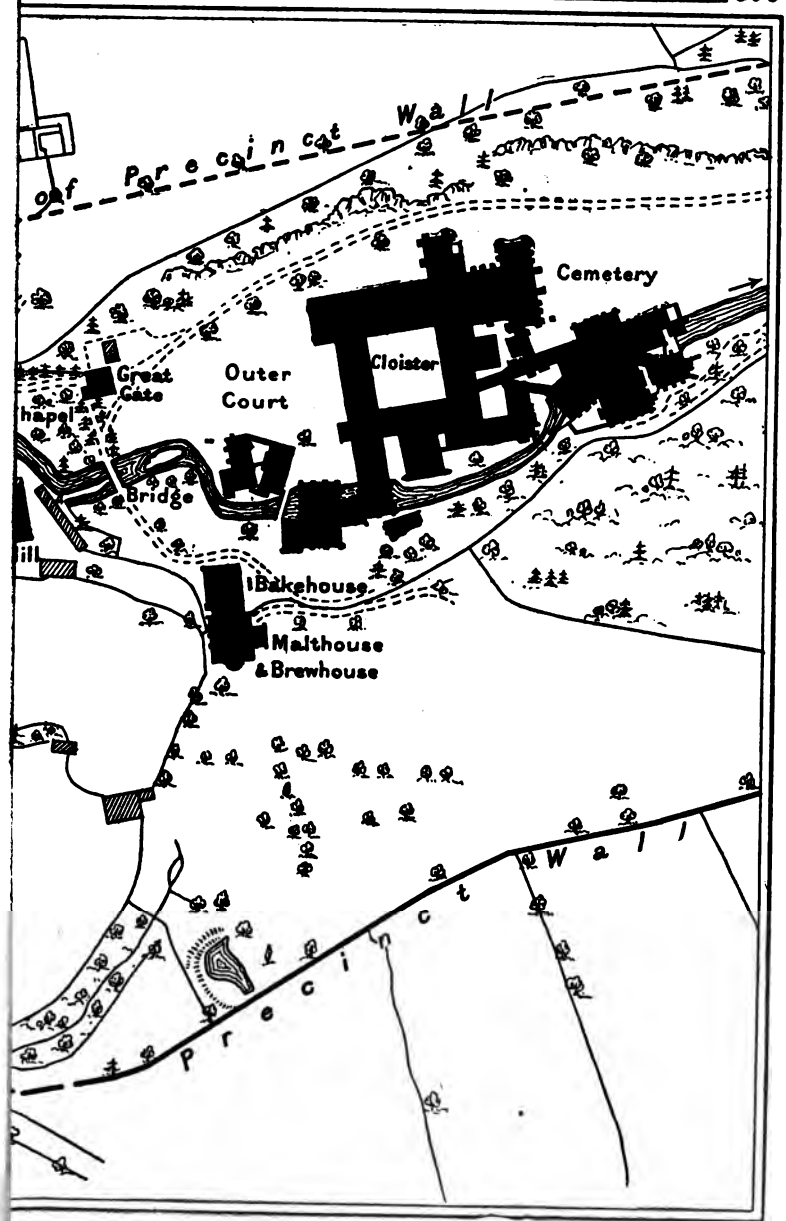
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